Novel on Dutch Reformed:
Spiked with many issues ..... p. 10

About those Pharisees:
We have to do better ..... p. 12

A kid and choices:
Dad, can't I have a goldfish? ... p. 13

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CHRISTIAN COURIER
A Reformed Weekly
January 24, 1997/No. 2517

Foundation starts project on freedom in the workplace

Alan Doerksen

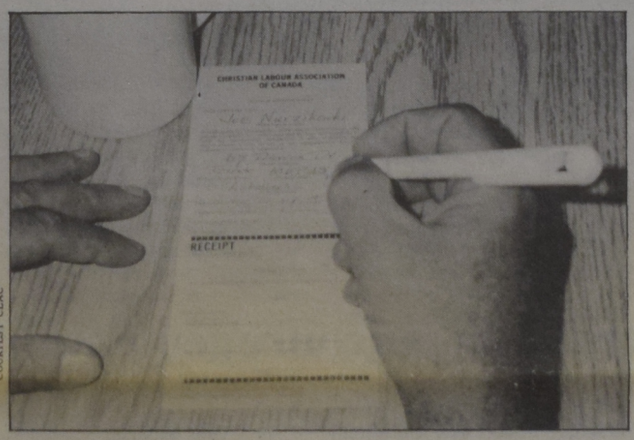
MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — Labor unions and collective bargaining are an important part of the Canadian workplace. But freedom of association (in this case, the right to choose whether or not to join a union) is also a legal right in Canada. Although these two concepts are sometimes in conflict, the Work Research Foundation (WRF) believes they can co-exist and has started a project that will promote the idea of freedom of association.

Freedom of association is "an issue most Canadians haven't thought about," admits Ray Pennings, who is the project's director (as well as publicity and promotions director for the Christian Labour Association of Canada). "It's not a burning issue in most Canadian minds. The first step is to raise awareness of the issue."

Testing the water

WRF will do this through several means. First of all, a survey will be conducted by the Angus Reid Group in February dealing with freedom of association. About 1,500 copies of the survey will be sent across Canada to make it "statistically significant for the population as a whole," says Pennings. Survey results will be published in March.

WRF is also arranging special events and "networking" to raise awareness of freedom of association. "We've held five information lunches in B.C. and Ontario," reports Pennings. He and others with WRF have started networking with people such as the academic community. But networking is "a time-consuming process," he says. WRF has also recently acquired an e-mail address and set up an Internet Web site.



COURTESY CLAC

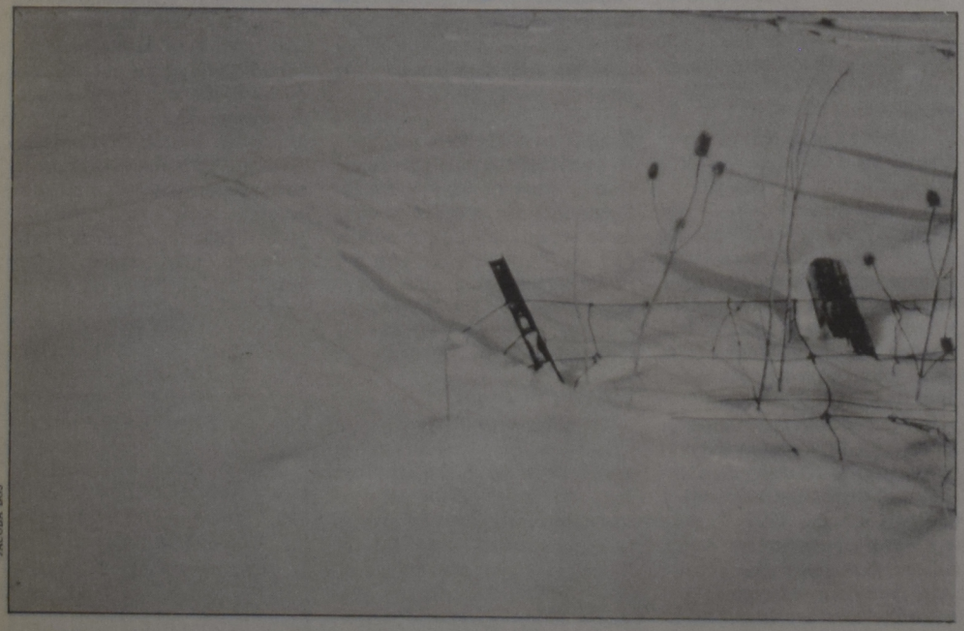
The project began last September, after the Donner Canadian Foundation agreed to give three years worth of funding ($125,000 a year) to WRF. To aid the project, WRF also hired a research assistant, Jennifer Wunsch, in December.

Democracy over coercion

Harry Antonides, research director of WRF, points out that although freedom of association is guaranteed in Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it's just not happening. In practice, some unions pressure people to join and sometimes prevent people from getting jobs if they refuse to join them, or provide other coercion to union members. But, says Antonides, "I think the majority of Canadians would favor freedom

See **FREEDOM** *page 2...*

Symphony in white


JACOBA BOS

"Now there comes an interlude of rest, a crescendo of quiet, a vision of calm, a scent of glory, and a final touch of majesty."

Taken from the poem "Symphony in White" by Joe Veltman, Maitland, Ont.

Mothers' group focuses on 'lifestyle evangelism'

Jeff Hoogendoorn

VICTORIA, B.C. — The MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) program is simple in its vision: to provide a support network so that the problems, stresses and isolation experienced by many stay-at-home mothers can be dealt with in a caring, nurturing and safe environment.

So successful has this program been that it has lifted itself from its humble beginnings of eight women meeting in Wheat Ridge, Colo., in 1973, to become MOPS International Inc. It enfolds chapters across the U.S. and Canada and stretches to Australia, New Zealand, England, Germany, the Netherlands and Malaysia.

Jenny Kramer and Sheila Tolsma are two of the MOPS coordinators at Christ Community Church in Victoria, B.C. Each says that MOPS is not a Bible study but a lifestyle evangelism program, which meets every two

See **MOPS** *page 2...*

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News

Freedom of association and unions are compatible

... continued from page 1

of association. Most people would be in favor of democracy, not coercion."

He stresses, "We are in no way attacking trade unionism as such. We think it's indispensable to have trade unions."

Both Pennings and Antonides work with CLAC, which Pennings says has always supported freedom of association during its 45 years of existence. Although some see collective bargaining and freedom of association as being at odds with each other, Pennings says, "I believe they're essentially compatible. I would argue you cannot create trust if a relationship is based on coercion."

COURTESY RAY PENNINGS

Ray Pennings

Union jealousy

Another part of WRF's project is to research and publicize questionable labor practices that have gone on recently. For instance, WRF is gathering information about a recent highway project on Vancouver Island in which only certain unionized workers were allowed to be involved.

A similar case documented by WRF involved pipeline construction workers in Alberta in the early 1990s. At that time, some of the workers joined CLAC and worked for firms affiliated with it. By doing this, they challenged an established monopoly which the Building Trades Council (BTC) had enjoyed.

Extensive sabotage occurred at the work sites of the CLAC workers. More than 20 holes were discovered after the pipeline had been installed. These holes had been drilled and then puttied over to avoid detection. Some of the workers also received intimidating phone calls. WRF would like to create more publicity for cases like this.

WRF has also researched the case of Merv Lavigne, an Ontario college instructor who challenged the issue of compulsory unionism in 1987, eventually reaching the Supreme Court of Canada. Lavigne argued that his constitutional right to free association was being compromised by his union's involvement in political causes not directly related to collective bargaining.

The Court ruled against Lavigne and the judge in charge, Justice LaForest, commented, "Is the preservation of industrial peace an objective so pressing and substantial as to warrant overriding a constitutional right? I think it is axiomatic that the answer to this question is 'Yes.'"

"Even the Supreme Court admits it's a denial of a constitutional right," Pennings observes. Because WRF is a charitable organization, it cannot lobby the government about this. Instead, it will focus on public education, especially through the media.

Move to partnership

Often in Canada, "labor and management have been seen to be enemies," says Antonides. Labor relations are often an adversarial "power struggle." Both labor and management need to make changes to allow more freedom of association, he says. They should move from adversarialism to "a partnership-type relationship."

WRF will also research labor relationships in the U.S and Europe to find out how they are similar, different or better than those in Canada.

In the future, Canada's labor laws will have to be extensively rewritten because of the changing face of the workplace. "We have in this new economy lots of different labor relationships," Pennings notes. For instance, many people now work at home, or have short-term contracts.

WRF was started in 1974 for the purpose of doing research and education in economics and industrial relations from a Christian perspective.

MOPS offers training, encouragement to mothers

... continued from page 1

weeks. Tolsma says it is "easy to invite your neighbor to something that is not a Bible study," as it is not an intimidating situation. Tolsma adds that although the program is aimed at the unchurched, MOPS is up-front about being Christian based. This outreach approach meshes well with the mission statement of Christ Community Church, a church which tries to meet the needs of both members and community members.

Different than Coffee Break

MOPS is somewhat different than Coffee Break, which is a vital program for women founded by the Christian Reformed Church. First CRC in Victoria, and many hundreds of other churches (not necessarily CRC) use the program. MOPS attempts to woo with a different approach. The two groups may target a similar audience, though MOPS may get unchurched women leery of Bible studies, and Coffee Break is not geared only to women who are mothers.

Jenny Kramer is the "Titus Woman" for the group at Christ Community Church, a title based on Titus 2:3-5, a statement on teaching. The thrust of the passage is that the "older woman [must] ...teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure..." (NIV). Kramer qualifies this saying that any Titus Woman would need a "vital, personal relationship with the Lord." Furthermore, she adds, a Titus Woman needs to be one with the Spirit.

As a Titus Woman, Kramer is responsible for giving a message at each meeting. Topics vary from "Trying not to be the perfect parent" to "Self-esteem: Womanhood"; "TV and the family"; "Sibling rivalry," to name a few. Kramer brings home her lessons of womanhood, marriage and motherhood through life experiences and sees herself as teacher, role model, friend and counsellor, as well as advisor to the MOPS group.

Kramer's topics are, however, given from a Christian and biblical perspective. Tolsma worries that sometimes when the religious aspect gets heavily played the unchurched women will get turned off "but they don't. They just keep listening." The group breaks into smaller discussion groups for a more intimate and personal approach.

For the unchurched women or those with little or no support network, says Kramer, the message and discussion is inspiring and fills a need. They "lap up any encouraging remark which makes them feel they're not alone in their situation." And while the message is not biblically based, Kramer admits quoting Scripture "without them knowing it because I believe the Word is living."

Kramer says that MOPS "blesses the women in the church as well — including me. I've grown a lot in my relationship to God." She recalls grappling for three months with the decision of whether or not to become the Titus Woman because she did not feel this was her calling. However, she says she finally could not deny the calling of the Spirit and admits discovering gifts she never new she had.

One of the most vital things Kramer says she offers women is unconditional love, for some simply want to have a friend. Sometimes she is called to offer more serious advice but admits that she "would never step out of [her] bounds to offer counselling," as her role is to walk with, to share with and support the women.

Filled to capacity

The three-year-old program at Christ Community Church has grown to capacity. Capacity has been reached not for lack of space, but for lack of caregivers for the children who are included in a program known as MOPETTES. Success is also measured in the fact that over 50 per cent of the women who attend are not members of Christ Community.

MOPS seems to have filled a need through such diverse activities as line dancing, a baking exchange, a course on CPR and a Mothers' Day brunch. The mothers also appreciate the time spent at each meeting doing crafts and simply talking with other women who have similar concerns, joys and lifestyles.

With more caregivers, MOPS at Christ Community Church will swell to even greater numbers. Tolsma points out that four other MOPS groups meet throughout Victoria. The key is to provide an outlet for women. "It's an important lifeline to have support with other mothers because you feel isolated. MOPS fills those needs.... To some it may sound rather hokey," adds Tolsma, "but it works."

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Thinkbit

Some people make it happen; some people watch it happen, and some people say, "What happened?"

From: Michael Myles, Ottawa

News

Christians need to be separate and involved, says panel

Bert Witvoet

ANCASTER, Ont. — Dr. Richard Mouw is no longer the dyed-in-the-wool Kuyperian he once was. Yes, he still likes to sing "This Is My Father's World," but as he gets older he is more inclined to sing the song of his youth: "This World Is Not My Home."

Mouw explained it this way at an open forum at Redeemer College: "I'm more pessimistic about our ability as Christians to change the prevailing culture; the church is a remnant people; and we live in 'the time of God's patience.'"

Christ may say that every square inch of life belongs to him, but that doesn't give ownership of the world to his followers. Mouw believes that Reformed people can learn a lot from the less triumphalist (and certainly not "detestable") Anabaptists.

Mouw was part of a panel that addressed the topic "Infiltration or Separation?" on January 15, along with Redeemer College professors Gene Haas, David Koyzis and Mike Goheen. Mouw taught philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., for 17 years and is now president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He was the guest speaker at Redeemer's Ninth Annual Staley Lecture Series.

Four resident aliens at Redeemer: from l. to r.: professors Gene Haas, David Koyzis, and Richard Mouw. *Mike Goheen*

Complementary influences

Campus pastor and assistant professor of religion and theology Mike Goheen grew up in a pietistic tradition like Mouw's, but he was influenced by theologian Richard Niehbuhr's five relationships of "Christ and culture" and charmed by Henry Van Til's *The Calvinist Concept of Culture*, which espouses the Reformed view that Christians must transform culture rather than flee it.

But Goheen, too, warned against losing a sense of separation from culture, something that Anabaptists and Third-World churches have preserved while they, too, seek to transform culture, he said.

The third panelist, David Koyzis, associate professor of political science, felt an early influence of Anabaptist teachings and writings. He was attracted to the emphasis on obedience, discipleship, the primacy of the gospel and the sense of an alternative community. For a while he regarded himself a pacifist.

But a closer examination of gospel passages that affirmed the authority of governments marked a turning for him to the Reformed tradition, which stressed that politics is an avenue of service to God.

Gene Haas, associate professor of religion and theology, grew up neither Reformed nor Anabaptist, but felt that the world opened up to him the moment he became a Christian.

Haas was struck by the fact that Henry Meeter's now classic book *Basic Ideas of Calvinism* deals mostly with politics. He believes that this creates the idea that "if we get the government, we get society." But this, to Haas, is a denial of the multifaceted nature of transformation.

When political power is slipping away from Christians, as it is today, they tend to withdraw from the task of transformation, said Haas. The end result is that many Christians resort to living the comfortable life.

The welfare of the city

A lively exchange between students and panelists followed. Students shared a variety of church backgrounds that showed the kind of tensions the panelists had been talking about. Most of the panelists seemed to agree that what is needed is a proper blend between prophetic critique of culture and a priestly involvement in that culture.

As Mouw explained it, "We are resident aliens in this world." What that means is that, like the exiles in Babylon, Christians have to seek the welfare of the city in which they are strangers.

BERT WITVOET PHOTOS

Part of the audience that participated in the open forum.

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Kingston-WLKC .....7:30 a.m 100.7
Newmarket-CKDX 9:30am 88.5
Oshawa-CKAR.....8:00am 1350
Owen Sound-CFOS.....10:30am 560
Pembroke-CHVR 10:00am 96.7
St.Catharines-CKTB....7:30pm 610
Sarnia-CHOK.....7:30am 1070
Stratford-CJCS 8:45am 1240
Windsor--CKLW 8:30am 580
Wingham-CKNX 10:30am 920
Woodstock-CKDK (fm) ...8:00am 102.3

NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John-CHSJ..... 9:30am 700

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown-CFCY ...7:00am 630

NOVA SCOTIA

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Guest Editorial

I drink, therefore I'm Canadian?

John Valk

When I saw the large "I AM Molson Canadian" banner strung high at one end of the Aitken University Centre (hockey arena) at the University of New Brunswick, I wondered whether the message was economic, cultural or religious.

Advertising revenue received from the Molson Corporation may be a fiscal windfall for the Aitken University Centre. Perhaps it is much needed to keep the centre afloat and Fredericton's hockey team from moving elsewhere. Perhaps the close relationship between Molson and hockey is an association we assume as natural — without question or concern. But then the slogan kept coming back to me: "I AM Molson Canadian." I concluded that the Molson advertisers were foisting something religious on me. Let me explain.

The phrase "I AM" was not created by Molson advertisers. It has a much longer tradition, undoubtedly longer than beer itself. It stems from the period of the Exodus, when the Israelites were liberated from slavery in Egypt. It is connected with Moses, the greatest prophet known to Israel (Deut. 34:10), who had received commands from God which would lead to the Israelites' freedom.

Who are you?

As strong a leader as he became, Moses in his early days had his moments of self-doubt. Approached by God in the burning bush (Exodus 3:1-22), he was instructed to go to the enslaved people to inform them that they were about to be freed. Immediately comprehending the enormity, if not impossibility, of this task, Moses asked, not intending humor, "Whom shall I say sent me?"

God, equally not intending humor, responded, "Tell them I AM has sent you: I AM who I AM." The "I AM," translated from the Hebrew, is YHWH, (Yahweh) a term with which we are more familiar.

Pharaoh of Egypt, who also regarded himself as an "I am," refused. He refused Moses, the Hebrew people and also the real I AM. The resistance put up by his Egyptian economic, cultural and military might, including his own "I am" power, was no match, however, for I AM. Pharaoh learned the hard way, and came to recognize that it was in his best interest to let the Israelites go.

The god of rationalism

In the 17th century we again encounter the "I am" phrase, this time in connection with the French philosopher Rene Descartes. Descartes, in attempting to establish absolute certainty, concluded that everything can be doubted, except for the *thinking* function of each person. He declared: *cogito ergo sum* — "I think, therefore *I am.*"

Perhaps initially unintended, Descartes' new dictum had considerable intellectual, if not religious, impact. Rational thought came to be the new "I am," the new god. As a result, any thing, idea or belief that could not pass rational muster was no longer considered worthy to be asserted, including much of what had been revealed in Scripture regarding I AM. In fact, because of this new "I am," some even came to doubt the existence of I AM.

As you can see, the Molson slogan stands in a formidable "I am" tradition. It appears to be the latest "I am," attempting to equal and out-do the earlier and more original I AM. That is a severely misguided endeavor. Scripture declares unequivocally that I AM has no equals: "I will have no other 'I ams' before me." "I AM the beginning (Alpha) and the end (Omega)."

Liberation through beer

Molson has long sought to liberate us from enslavement, and not least from our weekly work and study. That is the clear message in its lifestyle advertisements. One means by which Molson seeks to free us to enjoy the "good life" is through its promotion of "Hockey Night in Canada," with encouraging us, of course, to consume copious quantities of its particular libations.

Molson will argue that it is simply trying to secure an increasing "market share" for its products. But the message of its advertising slogans suggests something more, and hence my concern. Is Molson advocating, perhaps not unwittingly, that an "I AM Molson Canadian" lifestyle will give us the freedom we all seek, and that the "promised land" is that of beer and hockey?

Tom Sinclair-Faulkner, a sociologist of religion, argued some time ago in a journal article entitled "Pucking Trends: Hockey Night in Canada," that Canadian hockey culture has very strong religious connotations. These have surprising parallels to what has traditionally been associated with church and cathedral. Among them are sacred books and places, priests or spokespersons, male dominance, weekly gatherings, dress codes, expected behavior and communal drink.

A secular religion

Add to this the Molson slogan and what it entails, and the parallels become even more striking: hockey arenas as cathedrals, the chosen disciples as Molson advertisers and professional hockey promoters (and players?), the game as the weekly event, communion in the form of beer.

Is this a stretch of the imagination or a reality?

When we follow the dictates of false "I ams" we run the risk of being recreated in their image. When this occurs our freedoms become our excesses, which in turn become our nightmares. When we distort what I AM intended, all hell can break loose, literally. We witness this continually with the abuse of alcohol and with the remaking of sports into business and entertainment.

Is "I AM Molson Canadian" intimately linked to Canadian self-identity, something like "I drink, therefore, I am?" What, then of *the I AM*?

John Valk is the Christian Reformed Church's chaplain at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

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Letters

What's wrong with setting standards of behavior?

I read the article "Love and Legalism" (CC, Dec. 20) with interest and concern. It is indeed sad, if as Mr. Geisterfer writes, our concept of a biblical vision of life is reduced to intellectual assent with a set of doctrinal rules. Simply having one's doctrinal ducks neatly lined up just does not cut it.

The author also writes that we must start with loving ourselves before we can love our neighbor. There is truth to that, of course, but more fundamentally, love in our hearts is not there by nature, but only by the grace of God. It is when he reaches down to us with his love and changes our natural inclination to hate into love for him that we learn to truly love ourselves and our neighbor.

Geisterfer is entirely critical of the rules of behavior stipulated by the Christian organization providing care for the developmentally disabled. He refers to the list of moral standards presented on the back of the employment contract.

While I have no truck with lawyers' legalese, I have no problem when Christian employers make clear what minimum standard of behavior is expected from their employees. Whatever one would like a job interview to be or not to be, it has to be made clear at the outset what is expected of the prospective employee. A Christian employer, especially one who deals with developmentally disabled persons in a hometype setting, has to ensure a Christian environment.

Of course the biblical commands are often stated in negative terms. The Ten Commandments use "You shall not" repeatedly.

We probably agree wholeheartedly though, that God's rules for our lives need restating, also in 1997 language, even though we might disagree on some details. Mr. Geisterfer, however, believes that these rules against certain behavior are a way to legitimize discrimination and a way to persecute homosexuals under the guise of the Christian religion. I strongly disagree with Geisterfer's attempt to make it appear that Christ would approve of homosexual conduct. I see no difference between that and my pushing the very real heterosexual sin of adultery to a state of "normalcy."

Please understand me, this is not an attempt on my part to condemn homosexuals, as if I am less in need of God's forgiving grace. However, God does not want me to have multiple, heterosexual partners and I have to recognize that any inclination in me in that regard is wrong. Equally, God expresses himself rather clearly on unnatural sexual relations.

No tolerance for sin

Jesus' dealing with the Samaritan woman is instructive for us here. He did not condemn, but he did say, "Go now and leave your life of sin." Is that a Christ obsessed with religious dogma and the sexual affairs of others? Hardly. But let's not ignore what he did say. Hence, I disagree strongly with Geisterfer's statement: "Unless I am badly mistaken, Christ's message was one of compassion and tolerance, a message of love based on the forgiveness of sins."

To the contrary, Christ's: "Go now and leave your life of sin" makes quite clear that he does not tolerate the Samaritan woman's sin at all, though his compassion and forgiveness are plain indeed.

The Bible tells us that we are called to a life of obedience and self-denial and that goes for all of us, whether we are heterosexual or homosexual. We are all in need of repentance and God's grace. See, for example, these very clear instructions in Romans 6:7: "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

I think we had better keep our eyes firmly on Jesus and his power to renew our lives. But the Bible is clear in teaching that someone's brokenness may not become the norm. Can we agree on that?

Hank Kuntz
Rexdale, Ont.

Not every ton weighs a ton

I was interested in your translation of the open letter by professor Smalhout in the Jan. 10 issue of *Christian Courier*. One phrase in particular struck me: thieves were said to leave a jewelry store "with a ton of diamonds." This seems like a lot of diamonds.

Could it be that the Dutch read "*een ton aan diamanten*"? In that case, the meaning would be "a hundred thousand guilders' worth of diamonds."

Trivially yours,

Al Wolters
Hamilton, Ont.

You are absolutely correct. Even Dutch thieves are not that strong. I could take refuge in the fact that in colloquial English "a ton of diamonds" need not refer to weight, i.e. 2,000 lbs., but can simply indicate a lot of diamonds. That could make a ton of difference. But I won't. I missed the implication of the Dutch idiom.

Editor

Mini-editorial

Sometimes our mandate interferes with an animal's calling

We have two kittens. One of them we found on a deserted highway in the state of Wyoming last summer. She was estimated to be four weeks old and weighed eight ounces. We call her Wyoming. The second one we picked up at the local humane society to keep Wyoming company when my wife and I are at work. We call him Tumbleweed.

Tomorrow I'm bringing them both to the vet to have them "fixed." For a male to be fixed, he has to be castrated; for a female to be fixed, she has to be spayed.

Mandate confusion

Wyoming likes to sit on our shoulders when we eat our breakfast in the morning. Whenever she does that, it's as if my wife and I take turns wearing a fur collar. While I was wearing mine this morning, I told Wyoming about the upcoming operation tomorrow. I told her not to worry because the success rate is pretty good. I also said that I had to do it because of the cultural mandate I had been given via Adam and Eve. "We have to have dominion over you," I said.

Wyoming looked at me with her large innocent eyes and asked whether or not my cultural mandate was not interfering with her creation mandate to be fruitful and multiply. That was a hard one to answer, but I tried.

Bad leadership

It's not your fault, I said to her. Cats don't sin. But we human beings do sin and because of that we mess up our cultural mandate all the time, and that affects your creation mandate. Because of our failures there simply are too many of you. We do not have the proper dominion over you. We just let you cats roam and get pregnant without the least bit of discretion about who the father is, and whether or not we can find good homes for the kittens. Consequently, a lot of kittens end up at the humane society or left on the highway, the way you were.

Once an animal like you is born, it's our task to care for you. That's why we rescued you as you were crossing a four-lane highway. But caring for you also means that we have to anticipate over-population. And so we have to limit your fruitfulness. And by the way, they tell me sex for cats is not fun, and by having this feline hysterectomy you will live longer and happier.

Wyoming understood. She dipped her tail into my cereal as if to say, "Don't worry, old boy. We can always adopt."

I hope she passes the message on to Tumbleweed, who was too busy licking water from the kitchen tap this morning to take in the pre-operational counselling session. Rumor has it that when it comes to facing the consequences of his still adolescent amorous behavior, he is pro-choice .

BW

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Opinion

Are only teachers to blame?

Bert den Boggende

In the spring of 1996 *Christian Courier* carried two articles on education. One, by Alyce Oosterhuis, asked what to do about older teachers who seemed to be outdated. The other, by Bill Van Dyk, compared his slightly "anarchistic" experiences at a new, small Christian high school of a quarter century ago with a 1990s well-established and equipped larger Christian high school whose classes struck him as uninspiring. My impression was that both seemed to hold the teacher responsible.

They may be correct, but there may be others who should share some of the blame. Let me take some examples from my own teaching experience to illustrate my point.

1. Since starting teaching I have preferred group seating rather than rows, feeling that through a more informal setting I could get better results. Some parents let me know in no uncertain terms that this was not the right way to teach.

2. A bright Grade 5 student once asked me about evolution. I decided to explain as much as I could, indicating here and there where I thought there were flaws in the theory. Apparently I should not have explained so much: the chairperson of the board gave me a booklet with a literalistic interpretation of Genesis. Years later, when asked to explain my views of Christian education I mentioned how I reacted to the student's question. Someone told me then that I should have said that evolution was wrong and ungodly, without further explanation.

3. In the early 1970s "Jesus Christ Superstar" became very popular. While not a fan of rock music I let the students listen to the records, trying to discuss what was biblical and what was not. I was told that such music should not be heard in Christian schools.

4. As a supply teacher I was asked to teach [Madeleine L'Engle's] *A Wrinkle in Time*. Soon an irate parent showed up after school and told me that books with such imaginary tales ought not to be taught in Christian schools. Only stories relating real events were acceptable. An hour's talk could not change his mind.

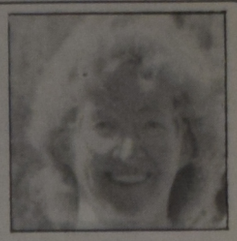
5. A geography project about an imaginary country or island with realistic geographic concepts applied to it drew a scathing attack of wasting students' time. The chairman told me to stick to real geography. That the project had real diagnostic value was apparently of no concern to him.

6. A unit about the Ancient Near East from a CSI district resource bank turned out to be unacceptable also. I gave the students photocopies of the unit, wrote a quite different introduction, and added and deleted several questions to make it more suitable. Halfway through the unit I was ordered to see the board chair. On the authority of a leading Christian educator in the United States he told me that the unit should never have been taught in a Christian school. After the blast of Arctic air it became evident that he had never bothered to inquire about the changes I had made.

Other teachers can undoubtedly supply other examples. Board members on occasion showed little interest in teachers' attempts to teach students discernment and wanted to play it safe; sometimes parents wanted to mould the teacher in their image, or at least wanted him or her to stick to older ways of teaching. I can imagine that some teachers would feel intimidated and/or discouraged by blunt and unfriendly words. The result may have been uninspiring classes and teachers who did not dare to try something new, fearing that they could loose their jobs.

Are teachers alone to blame? Maybe the whole Christian educational community should share. But these incidents were not written in order to put Christian schools, teachers, boards and parents in a bad light. Rather, they were written to help everyone realize that in such an environment it would be difficult to develop an exciting vision of Christian education. If my own example is an indication, there is hope for discouraged teachers: the incidents did not prevent me from developing a positive vision of Christian education.

Bert den Boggende is a teacher who lives in Fairview, Alta.



Marian den Boer

Grounded in Christ

If you had been driving down Bonaventure Drive in Hamilton, Ont., just before noon one Monday before Christmas you would have seen Marty connecting a shiny new set of cables from our car to our van. You also would have seen me standing beside Marty reading instructions out of a vehicle owner's manual. If you had looked a little closer, you would have noticed my back slightly skewed to the right and if you would have looked even closer you would have seen pain written on my face.

This was the Monday morning after I had announced to the world via *Christian Courier* that I had been divinely healed of a backache. Now I definitely had a backache which, of course, I was trying to ignore. "Don't believe your symptoms, believe in the power of Jesus Christ to heal you," the book on healing I had read, proclaimed.

'It isn't working'

"It isn't working!" my symptoms shouted as my lower back muscles tightened around the pain and my spine atrophied to the crooked angle of previous backaches.

But my sore back wasn't the only problem that morning. The van wouldn't start. One of the kids confessed to leaving an interior light on after Marty had specifically asked her to turn it off on the way home from church the evening before. At least the dead battery problem seemed relatively easy to solve.

"Connect the red positive cable to the positive terminal of the vehicle with the dead battery." I read, "Connect the other end to the positive terminal of the good battery. Now connect the black negative cable to the good battery's negative terminal. The other end of the negative cable goes to a heavy, unpainted metal part of the vehicle with the dead battery."

Since there wasn't an unpainted part of the frame in the vicinity of the battery, and since my back ached, and since I am not always inclined to follow instructions to the letter, I told Marty to attach the cable to the painted hood latch.

Sin stands in the way

While we waited for the charge to happen, we struck up a conversation with a neighbor just as a friend pulled into our driveway. I hobbled over to see what my friend wanted. "I only have a minute. I've come to pray for your back," she said.

My friend and I retreated into the house as Marty and the neighbor tried to figure out why the van still wouldn't start. My friend put her hand on my back and prayed for healing. After she left my back still ached, but my attention was drawn to a Bible verse: "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16). This verse pricked my conscience. I knew immediately what sin I had been trying to cover up and ignore. It took me a day or so to get up the courage, but I did confess my sin to Marty and to my friend, and they each in turn prayed with me.

When the unconfessed sin no longer stood between me and redemption and I was once more firmly grounded in Jesus Christ, the most amazing thing happened. A divine chiropractor pulled, prodded and realigned my back. Over the next few days this happened several times. Soon my back was completely straight.

As for the van with the dead battery, when the neighbor and Marty grounded the negative black of the cable to an unpainted portion of the van frame, the motor roared to life.

Marian den Boer lives with her husband and six children in Hamilton, Ont.

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The English Patient

The desert has never looked so inviting

Marian Van Til

The English Patient

Rated AA. Stars Ralph Fiennes, Kristin Scott Thomas, Juliette Binoche, Willem Dafoe, Naveen Andrews. Written and directed by Anthony Minghella. Based on the novel by Michael Ondaatje.

The *English Patient* is a visually sumptuous film. That's fitting for a story about the destructive flames of illicit passion, set in exotic locations in the period just before, during and after World War II: an archeological camp in the Sahara Desert, the city of Tobruk (Tubruq, Libya) and an abandoned monastery in rural Italy.

With Canadian novelist Michael Ondaatje's blessing, British screenwriter/director Anthony Minghella narrowed the book's focus, which jumps backwards and forward in time, through Italy, Africa, England and Canada.

The movie alternates between present and past as the book does, but focuses more tightly on Count Almasy (Ralph Fiennes), a Hungarian who is a part of a British explorers/ map-makers group in Africa. (Almasy was a real person, apparently a sadistic fellow who systematically collaborated with the Nazis. But lest one wonder about the film's sympathetic portrayal of him, a written epilogue advises that this is a work of fiction.)

It is 1944. A bi-plane hums across a yellow, undulating sea of desert. Guns turn on it and fire. The plane streaks downward, explodes. A charred but live figure is rescued by nomads. He somehow ends up in a British hospital but seems to have no recollection of who he is. He speaks flawless English. He also speaks flawless German. And various other languages. Is he a spy? The only clue to his past is a book he has with him by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus. The nurses assume he's British so he's dubbed " the English patient." That's how we're introduced to Almasy.

An eclectic group

There are several other key figures. A French Canadian nurse (Juliette Binoche) seems to tragically lose everyone she gets close to. She leaves her unit as it winds through Italy at the war's end in order to care for the English patient in an abandoned monastery, knowing he will die soon. Her act of compassion becomes a salve not only to him, but to herself.

David Caravaggio (Willem Dafoe) is a Canadian thief with mysterious connections and a vague past. He has a vendetta against Almasy, the nature of which we learn near the end of the movie.

The "Sand Club" is the group of six or seven men and one woman who are exploring and mapping the Sahara Desert for the British government. The woman is Katherine Clifton, who is accompanying her husband on the expedition. The Cliftons are wealthy socialites who grew up together as childhood friends and eventually married.

No justification

Almasy and Katherine are quickly and inexplicably drawn together. Their affair lies at the heart of the story and the disaster that befalls them and those close to them. A serious flaw in this still compelling film is its lack of dramatic justification for Almasy and Katherine to become lovers. Does this kind of passion need to be explained? It does when it is the crux of a film's story.

We're led to believe that Katherine has a good marriage and an adoring husband who puts no crimps on her freedom. Then we see Almasy and Katherine exchange prolonged looks; then circumstances allow them to spend a night alone, talking. Shortly after, they're lovers.

Having a jolly, talkative type as a husband, is Katherine irresistably attracted to Almasy's brooding, laconic, even sullen nature? Is Almasy attracted to Katherine's independence as well as her beauty? Has this remote, exotic world lowered the inhibitions they would maintain at home? Forbidden sexual passion can burn irrationally hot.

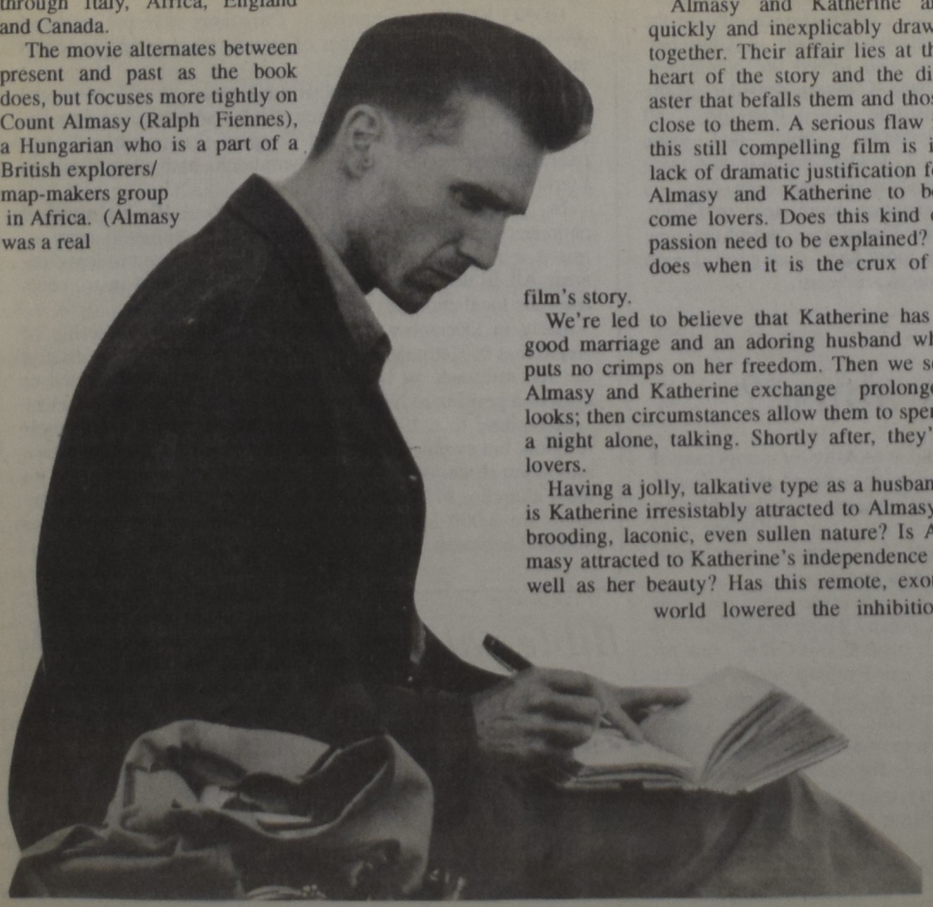
Yet we don't learn enough about Katherine or her true relationship with her husband to understand, or perhaps even sympathize, with her attraction to Almasy. And Almasy is an enigma virtually from start to finish. Admittedly, that makes him somewhat intriguing; but he's not sympathetic enough for the audience to be deeply moved by his ruining of his life. We pity him in his scarred state as a broken human being, not as a person we've come to care about.

Kristin Scott Thomas plays wealthy socialite Katherine Clifton.

No tears

The characters seem complex, their personalities and motives are revealed only bit by bit, and some remain essentially mysterious — we're never bored during the nearly three-hours this film takes up. But on the whole, we don't become emotionally engaged with the characters (the nurse is perhaps the exception). Even death doesn't have much of an impact. This is a pretty bleak story but no one leaves the theatre crying.

The English Patient is technically and photographically beautiful. Minghella's screenplay captures the poetic nature of Ondaatje's novel. The film's movement between past and present is as seamless as in any film I can remember — specific sounds often act as the catalyst in the present that becomes a key to the past. But it is essentially *The English Patient's* stunning visual images, more than its characters or story, that stick with you after it's over.



Ralph Fiennes as "the English patient."

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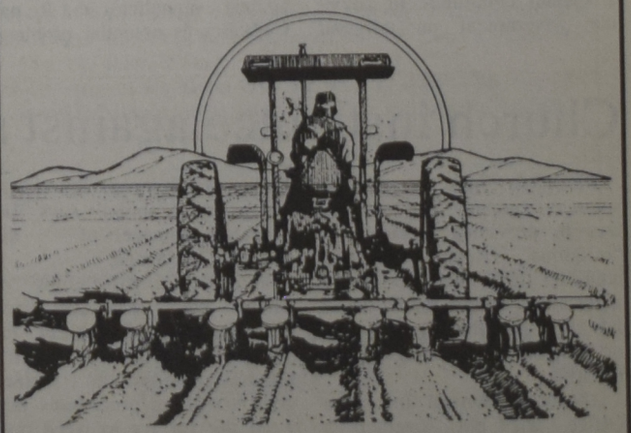

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Church

Thousands of students commit to world missions at Urbana

URBANA, Ill. (IVCF) — As a result of how God moved at Urbana 96, thousands of students from across North America have committed themselves to cross-cultural missions and are beginning to consider their next steps in fulfilling those commitments.

Urbana 96, sponsored by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship-U.S.A. and Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada, drew more than 19,000 students, missionaries and others to the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign from Dec. 27-31, under the theme "You Are My Witnesses."

Mission agency and Bible school representatives reported their days being filled with interviews of young men and women eager to make specific contributions to the world mission of the church.

And 15,857 delegates turned in Urbana 96 decision cards as an expression of their commitments made at the convention. More decision cards are expected to be turned in as delegates reflect on their experiences after Urbana 96.

'Tip of the iceberg'

"We've only seen the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of everything God has done at Urbana 96," says Urbana 96 director Dan Harrison. "The statistics from the decision cards are an incomplete measurement of everything that went on during Urbana; but they do give some indication of the depth of delegate interest and where we expect to see impact as a result of their time here."

For example, about 2,750 delegates declared their intent to pursue cross-cultural missions *this* summer, and another 2,000 indicated plans to go on a short-term missions project at a later date; 2,867 indicated they would pursue missions as a life work; 2,228 were prepared to make a one- to two-year commitment; 7,861 indicated they would clarify how and when they would pursue missions involvement; 9,401 recommitted themselves to Jesus' Lordship; and 180 made first-time commitments to Christ.

Delegates could choose from among more than a dozen options in declaring their next steps in following through on the convention. For example: 9,797 decided to "study Scripture to better understand God's character and heart for the world;" 7,790 decided to pray regularly for global evangelization; and 6,937 declared their intent to pray regularly for two people who are not yet Christians.

Delegates also declared their intention to become more involved in student fellowships (2,745), churches (2,254), or a more intentional witness at work (3,075). Also, 974 delegates decided to join or form a team in order to serve in an "unreached people group" (groups of 10,000 or more people, of whom two per cent or fewer are evangelical Christians).

Skipping meal raises food money

Another illustration of delegate commitment to missions is seen through the offerings taken at Urbana 96. A total of more than $285,000 was given towards hunger relief and more than $160,000 was given to support pioneering student work through the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. By choosing to skip one meal during the convention, delegates also raised $90,000 for world hunger relief. Also, 3,890 delegates committed to begin or continue more regular giving to missions.

The 1996 convention continues a trend towards greater ethnic diversity among delegates. Less than 65 per cent of Urbana 96 attendees were white; more than one-fifth were Asian in origin. Among decisions made at Urbana 96, 983 delegates decided to pursue racial reconciliation by developing a meaningful friendship with a person of a different ethnic background.

Follow-up important

Follow-up of delegates continues in earnest. Pastors are being notified of commitments by any delegates from their churches. Agencies and Bible schools are following through on contacts established through Urbana 96.

People unable to attend Urbana 96 can still experience the sights and sounds of the convention through visiting the Internet (www.urbana.org).

U.S. establishes special commission to investigate religious freedom

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — Many churches around the world responded to the call of the World Evangelical Fellowship to hold a day of prayer Sept: 29 for persecuted Christians. A side effect of recent publicity has been a new government committee in the United States.

In September, the U.S. Department of State established a special committee to advise the government on religious freedom abroad. The move was similar to special resolutions in both houses of Congress. The Senate had called for a special advisor.

The committee will have both evangelical and liberal Christians on it. Nina Shea, director of the Puebla Program on Religious Freedom, has accepted a nomination to serve. She views the persecution against evangelicals and Roman Catholics as essential problems for the committee to address. Joan Campbell, secretary for the National Council of Churches, has also joined the committee. Diane Knippers, president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, notes that some NCC leaders publicly minimize persecution, and even deny its existence completely in China. She feared the committee may do more harm than good if such voices are heard.

Church insurance against sex abuse?

REGINA, Sask. — An insurance company that specializes in providing services for "religious" clients says that churches may need to insure themselves against sexual abuse lawsuits more than against theft or fire, says a Canadian Press report.

The Ecclesiastical Insurance Office has put together a liability policy which is unique in the insurance industry, it says, and which covers church authorities in sexual abuse cases. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Office is a British company which has moved into Canada. It is Britain's main insurer of churches. "There's a big need to provide coverage for sexual and physical abuse," says Bill Breckles, manager of the company in Canada.

Volunteer organizations of various kinds may also need such insurance. Liability insurance can reduce a church's financial risk but can't replace good screening procedures that weed out (or try to weed out) "bad apples," says Laurie LeBlanc, regional executive director of Big Brothers of Ontario. Big Brothers requires its chapters to carry liability policies that include sexual abuse within personal injury coverage.

But insurers can actually hurt abuse victims, says J.J. Byrne, who is looking for compensation for abuse suffered at Newfoundland's Mount Cashel orphanage. They drag out settlement talks until the victim is worn down, asserts Byrne.

A spokesperson for the Anglican Church of Canada says that insurance is OK as back up, but can't replace care taken in hiring people of integrity.

Despite all the recent attention to abuse in religious institutions, for such institutions to carry insurance against potential victims' claims is not common, says Alan Wood of the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

Church attacks worry Nepali Christians

Alex Buchan

HONG KONG (Compass) — Christians in Nepal have expressed alarm over a number of attacks on churches in recent months.

In November 1996, local Hindus attacked and destroyed three churches in Dading during Sunday service. A spokesperson for the Nepali church told *Compass* that members fled in panic to their homes. Bibles, hymnbooks and other Christian literature were destroyed.

In another incident in Janakpur, local Hindus attacked churches and destroyed them. Earlier, three believers were arrested and beaten in Trisuli, and two were ordered to leave the area. All Bibles, hymnals, literature and musical instruments from the local churches were taken away.

Early in December, the National Churches Fellowship of Nepal met in Kathmandu for an emergency meeting to discuss the recent attack on believers and churches. They agreed to present a petition to Nepal's Home Minister about the attacks.

According to a 1992 law, Nepalis are free to change their religion, but evangelism is still technically illegal and carries a maximum three-year prison sentence. In 1961, there were no local churches in Nepal and only 25 known Christians. Today there are 2,000 local churches and an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 believers.

Bible sales in the Netherlands

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (REC) — A survey by the Netherlands Bible Society reveals an increase in possession and reading of Bibles. The survey covered Netherlanders 15 years and older. Since the last survey about seven years ago, all age-categories above 25 years old have an increase in Bible possession. The survey showed that especially among Roman Catholics and the unchurched there was an increase.

Bible reading was also shown to have increased. Reasons given for reading were for comfort and support, for life-orientation and for inspiration in daily life.

Veteran China watcher moves research arm from Hong Kong

Alex Buchan

HONG KONG (Compass) — One of the most fearless China watchers, Dr. Jonathan Chao, moved the bulk of his research operation in November from Hong Kong to Taiwan in light of the colony's handover to Chinese rulers in July 1997. The founder and president of China Ministries International, and the leader of the Chinese Church Research Centre, told *Compass*, "I don't want to be told to leave and *then* start packing. I'll go now."

Regarded among evangelical ministries as one of the most effective chroniclers of the Chinese house church phenomenon, Chao provided in the early 1980s the benchmark figure of 50 million house church believers that most missions base their China strategies upon. He now reckons that number to be "maybe 80 million, maybe more."

Earned ire of officials

Cataloguing the growth of the house church millions earned him the ire of the official Chinese church, the Three Self Patriotic Movement, who maintain such a high figure is a mischievous fiction for fundraising purposes. Chao has been attacked four times in their publication *Tien Feng*, and branded anti-China. When two house church leaders in Beijing were arrested in May they were forced to write he was a "Taiwanese spy."

Chao founded the Chinese Church Research Centre in 1978, now one of the various ministries that make up China Ministries International. Valuable archival material has been shipped from the Centre to Taiwan, where "historical and cultural studies" of China will be conducted. But a small research unit covering contemporary China and publishing the bi-monthly *China News and Church Report* will continue in Hong Kong.

Not moving out of fear

Chao stressed, however, it was not because of fears of personal reprisal that he was moving most of his operation to Taiwan, but a considered response to "the official documents that state how Hong Kong will be governed."

Enshrined in the 1991 Basic Law — Hong Kong's virtual constitution for the post 1997 period — is the principle agreed upon between Beijing and the leaders of the future Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong called the "three mutuals." The governments of China and Hong Kong are to observe "mutual respect, non-interference, and non-subordination."

Says Chao, "Any ministry that stays in Hong Kong with the purpose of working with the mainland house churches — the illegal church of China — will therefore be in violation of the mutual non-interference principle."

Proof that the Chinese have not ceased to regard him as an enemy came earlier this year when Chinese officials arranged a dinner for all the 13 seminary leaders in Hong Kong, save one, Dr. Chao. (Chao heads an 80-student seminary in the territory.)

Manipulative 'friendship'

He does not regret his stance however, claiming he is freer to speak out without worry. "If you want to be a friend of China, you go to them. But then they tell you how to be their friend. If you don't do what they want you to, you are automatically their enemy. It's highly manipulative." Consequently many denominations who have links with the Three Self dare not speak out on behalf of the house churches for fear of losing their status as "friends."

Other evangelical ministries that preserve links to China's house churches have moved their base of operations out of Hong Kong also, though some talk of remaining while maintaining links with both Three Self and house churches.

Missions and churches based in Hong Kong that focus only on Hong Kong should not be affected as religious freedom within the region after 1997 is guaranteed by the Basic Law. Chao is not moving his seminary as it primarily trains Hong Kong Chinese for local ministry.

Chapter & Verse

- Wayne Brouwer
- Andrew Kuyvenhoven
- Laura Smit
- Al Wolters

Talk isn't cheap

"All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue, it is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water" (James 3:7-12).

A Jewish rabbi was officiating at the funeral of a woman from his congregation. During the service the husband constantly shook his head back and forth. In a low and mournful sob he kept repeating over and over; "I love her! I love her! I love her!"

After the burial, the man refused to leave the gravesite. People tried to take his arm and lead him back to his car, but he shrugged off every attempt. Finally the rabbi himself made the effort. He said, "It's time to go now, Fred. You can take your memories with you."

Only then did the sorrow break out with explanation. Fred shook his head again and sobbed: "You don't understand. I loved her so much, but I never let her know it. I never told her how much she meant to me!"

The sounds of silence

It was a sorry sight, said the rabbi. The worst part was that this man had stood in his congregation every Sabbath for years, intoning the praises of God! And yet this tongue so skilled had missed a thousand opportunities to declare what was desperately needed in the most important relationship of his earthly life.

We know the "poison" that tongues can produce. But there is also a poison of silence. We can waste our words on tedious talk that babbles of weather and horsepower and clothes and customs, and forget to make the sounds of love. A university study found that a typical North American father converses with each of his children an average of 37 seconds *per day*. There's not a lot that can be said in that time. Very likely even many of those seconds are spent collecting communication miscues that bite rather than words that heal and offer hope.

Talking to the photo album

Richard Leigh remembers well how a lifetime of living in the same house can still create strangers in a single family. He wrote it out like this: *The greatest man I never knew lived just down the hall/And every day we said "Hello!" but never touched at all./He was in his paper, I was in my room;/How was I to know he thought I hung the moon?!/The greatest man I never knew came home late every night./He never had too much to say; too much was on his mind./I never really knew him, and now it seems so sad:/Everything he gave to us took all he had./Then the days turned into years, and the memories to black and white./He grew cold like a winter wind blowing across my life./The greatest words I never heard I guess I'll never hear./ The man I thought could never die has been dead almost a year./I hear he was good at business, but there was a business left to do./He never said he loved me. Guess he thought I knew.*

Most of us know when the barbs of our tongues dig blood from the souls of others. But few of us are wise enough to hear the pain caused by silence when we poison some of our best relationships.

Wayne Brouwer is senior pastor at Harderwyk Chr. Ref. Church in Holland, Mich.

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Author documents universal issues in first novel

Jessie Schut

Betty Smartt Carter's first published novel *I Read It in the Wordless Book* provides both an amusing and insightful look at the issues a young girl faces as she grows up in a staunch Dutch Reformed community. Yet her name hardly sounds like it's of Dutch origin. How can she write so convincingly about the Dutch Reformed community?

"If it seems familiar, don't be fooled," says Carter. "I don't really know you that well." Even though Carter's mother's ancestors did come from Holland originally, back when North America was just being settled, the familiarity with a Dutch Reformed way of life comes more from friends and experiences in the Calvinistic communities she grew up in.

Cultural tidbits

Carter's father is a Presbyterian minister, one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church of America. For a number of years while she was growing up, he pastored a large congregation in Virginia that prided itself on its Reformed heritage. And many Reformed Christians of Dutch background taught in the Christian schools she attended. Their stories, and the stories her mother told her of the years when she taught in a Christian school in Patterson, New Jersey, became the sources of the cultural tidbits that she's woven into her book.

Her primary intention, however, was not to write a book about the Dutch Reformed way of life, but to document the evangelical experience. She chose the Dutch Reformed community as a setting because of its distinctive cultural characteristics."Evangelicals have their own ethnic identity — that sense of identification happens in a group," she says. "For instance, I talked to my Polish friend, and I told her how it felt to grow up in an evangelical community, going to our own bookstores, having our own summer camps, and she says, 'You sound like you could be Polish!'"

She wants to write about universal issues from her own corner of the world, which is the American South.

Carter says her goal was to write about Christian evangelicals in the way Chaim Potok writes about Jews, or Alan Paton about Afrikaaners.

She wants to write about universal issues from her own corner of the world, which is the American South.

She grew up in Virginia and Georgia, then attended school in Wheaton, Illinois. "I hated it there at first — I was so rebellious, and broke every rule the first year I was there," she says. "But after a while I grew to love it — the diversity of students and experiences, the teachers and classes, and my friends all helped me grow and develop."

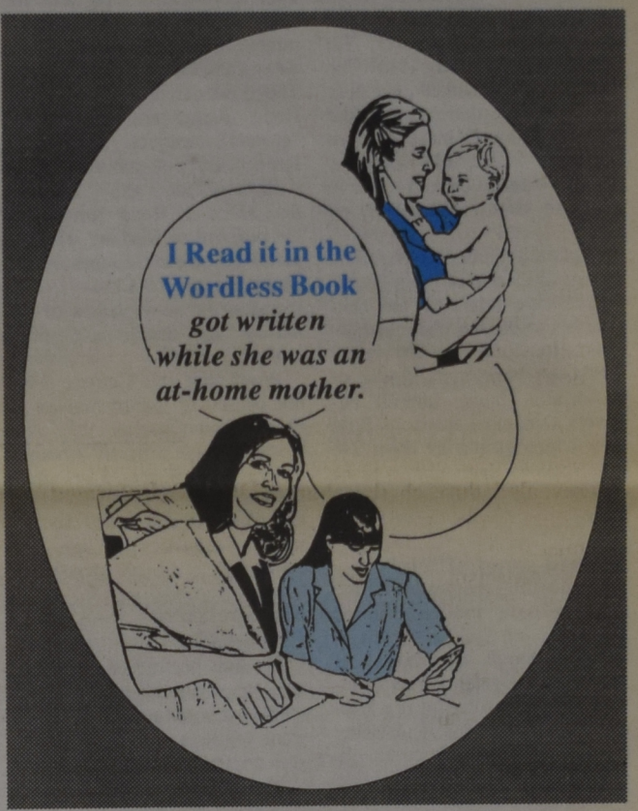
Wrote during lunch and nap times

She wrote her first novel, an as-yet unpublished mystery, while working to put her husband through school. "I didn't like my job, it was really boring, so I wrote during every noon hour," she says.

Carter wrote *I Read it in the Wordless Book* while she was an at-home mother after the birth of her first child. It took two-and-a-half years of her daughter's two-hour naps to complete the book, and then another two years to get it published.

Many of the issues Carter tackles in the novel arise out of her own experiences as she was growing up, and issues she still faces today. "In the book I deal with the issues of balancing the stability of church and home with the excitement of artistic freedom," she says. "I guess those are personal issues for me too."

"Also, I was trying to show a girl searching for her mother, and it's an allegory for the Christian search for God. We often look in the wrong places; some of the choices we make don't satisfy in the long run, they're not loyal or stable."



Another issue that Carter deals with is the Holy Spirit's role in a Christian's life. In the book, the Holy Spirit is symbolized by a devastating tornado that rips through the town. So often, she feels, Reformed people take pride in their self-reliance, and minimize the power and work of the Holy Spirit. "If Christ relied on the Spirit to strengthen and guide him in his struggles, how much more should we who are merely humans do the same?"

"We tend to look at everything so logically," she says. "For instance, when I said to a friend, 'I wish I could see a miracle,' she gave me the standard Reformed reply: 'That's not what Christianity is all about, it's about plugging away every day and asking for grace to see your way through.' It sounded very willful and self-reliant, not really what the Scriptures are teaching, and that to me is the Reformed error."

She's quick to point out that every denomination

I read it in the wordless book

by Betty Smartt Carter

...continued from p. 10

has its own weaknesses. "Charismatics have their own sets of errors that seem so glaring to Reformed people," she says, "but they have strengths, too, that we can learn from. Phuong (the Vietnamese woman in the book), for instance, needs her charismatic group to help her heal from the ordeals that she's undergone."

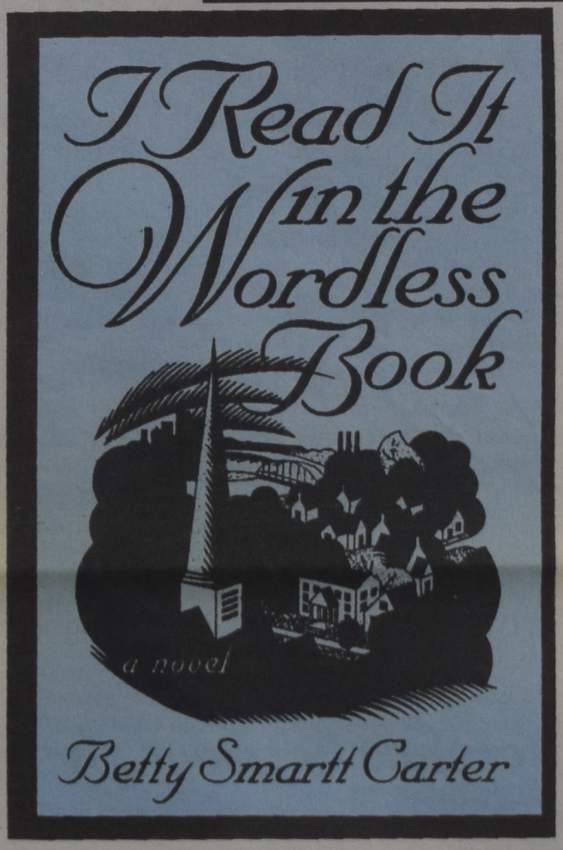
Carter is hoping that her own doubts and struggles revealed through the characters in the book won't be misunderstood by readers as criticism of the Reformed community.

'Mustard seed' faith needed

"Christians who put themselves on the line (singers, writers, etc.) tend to get put on a pedestal as heroes, and the Christian community wants them to be giants in the faith," she says. "But look what happens to some of those people: so many people are expecting so much from them that they can't be honest. So they end up in trouble. I think we all should confess, we all have doubts, don't we? I believe in the parable of the talents — you need to give God what you can.

"I have a small faith and I offer it to him, and hope the mustard seed will be the beginning of something. Nothing's perfect in this world, but God is there. He's the one that will see you through."

I Read It in the Wordless Book by Betty Smartt Carter. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1996. Paper, 398 pp. Reviewed by Jessie Schut.



"Besides the Rex Dykema Funeral Home, there was no place cooler on a hot day in Dutch Falls, Virginia, than our public library...."

This opening line from *I Read It in the Wordless Book* sets the tone for a novel about a young girl growing up in a staunch Dutch Reformed community in the '70s. Carrie Grietkirk observes the beliefs and the idiosyncrasies of her family and congregation, trying to make sense of the conflicting messages they send out. And while lots is going on in the community, she herself is discovering the realities of trying to live a Christian life, torn between the temptations of the world and the call to follow Jesus.

The setting for the novel is Dutch Falls, Virginia, a small community established in the early 1720s by Janz DeGroot, who left behind the good life in Hackensack, New Jersey, to preach the good Reformed gospel to the English in Virginia.

He established himself and his family on the banks of the Appomattox River, and began holding Sunday worship services in his barn, preaching in English to attract his neighbors. The English never came, but the rest of his family and friends did.

Now, 250 years later, the town is dominated by the First Reformed Church of Virginia (FRC of V) — "No sister to those great Dutch Reformed congregations up North" that have watered down true Christianity with worldly philosophies by people such as Norman Vincent Peale. This church serves a meaty entree every Sunday.

In a setting in which religion has become as much a culture as a set of convictions, motherless Carrie lives with her oma while her father labors in the mission fields. Life is pretty predictable — Oma bleaches the countertops whenever she gets upset, Dominie Grunstra's Song of Solomon sermon is preached at every wedding, and Nancy Hagedoorn (nee Talsma) teaches a song from the Wordless Book every year at vacation Bible school.

Into the predictability comes Ginger Jordan, a flamboyant musician and actress, who fills in as song leader one day at vacation Bible school. Although her husband, Frank, leads a charismatic little flock in town, Ginger is getting tired of the straight-laced life and is getting ready to return to her acting roots.

When Ginger asks Carrie to tend her baby during rehearsals of a musical, Carrie is enthralled, and gradually gets drawn into the theatrical life.

Meanwhile, her father has returned from his work in the refugee camps of Asia with a Vietnamese wife. Not only is the new wife, Phuong, a foreigner, but she has charismatic tendencies, having been led to Christ by Pentecostal missionaries.

Reformed Christians with Dutch roots will recognize bits and pieces of themselves in the well-drawn characters and events in the story.

When the naturally reserved Oma has a hard time accepting her new daughter-in-law, the reader recognizes his or her own discomfort with ethnic diversity. Many women will identify with Carrie as they recall their own adolescent attraction to the "sinful" life of dance, movies and theatre.

And many Christians will have to admit that, like the head deacon in the book, the upright facade they present Sunday morning at church won't stand up to the wear and tear of weekday choices and temptations.

This is Betty Smartt Carter's first published novel, and it has its weaknesses — the story rambles on a bit — but it is a fascinating look into the coming of age of a young girl, and a glimpse into the foibles and weaknesses of a Reformed community, which, in the end, is redeemed by grace.

Theology

Surpassing the Pharisees in righteousness

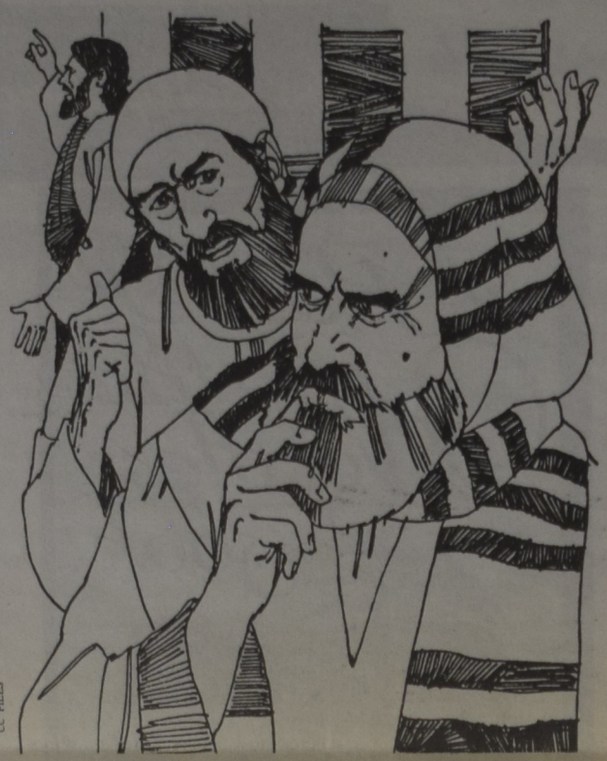
Jon Westra

Back in the time of Jesus, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees worked harder at pleasing God than anyone I know today. They strived with their every breath to obey every last commandment and live rightly before God. They were honored as godly and holy men. I suppose that if we saw them today we would feel the same — like when we see Amish people living out their different lifestyle before God. I may not agree, or have what it takes, but I respect them. The Pharisees tried so hard! There is no way I could ever match that kind of lifestyle.

And truthfully, I don't want to work that hard at religion.

But then Jesus says in Matthew 5 that "unless our righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, we will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven." Wait one minute! How can we do it any better than the Pharisees? If they fall short; then we are doomed. Apparently heaven is out of our reach.

The way I read the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) is that Jesus also wants to demonstrate that even the highest standard of righteousness in that day was not good enough to gain the Kingdom of Heaven. In example after example in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus shows us that not even the Pharisees were as righteous as we thought they were. Sure, maybe they didn't commit adultery, but did they never lust? Sure they never murdered — but were they ever angry? So if the standard is higher than what the Pharisees could meet — then what?



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Jesus and the Pharisees had distinctly different standards of righteousness. In the above illustration, teachers of the law listen critically to Jesus.

Jesus tells us that he has fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17). He is the one, the only one, who did it perfectly. He is the only righteous one. Since keeping the law is an impossible standard of righteousness for us, we must find another way.

Jesus fulfills the law. He meets the standard perfectly. The triune God accepts us when we accept Jesus. We are made righteous and acceptable to God when we believe in Jesus. "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22).

But the story doesn't end there. I am so grateful to Jesus for gaining the Kingdom of Heaven for me that my heart wants to thank him. I want to be more and more like him. I want to live my life for him.

How do I do that? How can I be a salt in the world so that when people have a taste of me they will become thirsty for him?

I do not keep the law, but I follow it.

The answer brings me back to the law of God. I will do what he desires of me through following the law. Except that now I do it not to keep it, but to follow it. It has been kept for me. It is filled up. Now I follow it as one who has kept it. In other words, because I have Christ in me, I am free to follow the law with a righteousness that exceeds that of the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.

Jon Westra is pastor of Celebration Community Church, a Christian Reformed church planting ministry in Phoenix, Arizona.

What is the difference between Jesus' righteousness and that of the Pharisees?

Marvin Hoogland

My thanks to Jon Westra for his reflections on the Sermon on the Mount, with the focus on Jesus' words: "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of heaven."

I, too, have found that passage to be central to the gospel's message, to the Christian life and to the church's mission. I'd like to add just one or two thoughts to what Jon writes. He states: "Jesus tells us that he has fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matt. 5:17). He is the one, the only one who did it perfectly. He is the only righteous one. Since keeping the law is an impossible standard of righteousness for us, then we must find another way. Jesus fulfills the law. He meets the standard perfectly. The triune God accepts us when we accept Jesus. We are made righteous and acceptable to God when we believe in Jesus. 'This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe' (Romans 3:22)."

Qualitative difference

I ask myself, what is the difference between Jesus' righteousness and that of the Pharisees? Is it just that they failed to keep the law and he succeeded? Or is there a qualitative difference between the two kinds of righteousness, that which comes from God and that which is "their own" (Romans 10: 3)? I think the latter. And can we say more about how Jesus' righteousness becomes ours? I think so.

What Jesus did not only fulfilled the law, but fulfilled the whole will of the Father, who, in sending the Son, actively embraced sinners and drew them to himself. Even in their sin he valued them. (Cf. Matt. 7:26, still part of the Sermon). He valued sinners! That is what the Pharisees, in and with their righteousness, failed to do.

But doing that is God's way of doing right, of making things right (=redemption, reconciliation). Doing that is the will of God that Jesus described as his meat and drink. He pursued that righteousness, that kind of obedience, all the way to death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). He prayed forgiveness even on those who were crucifying him! He valued them, too. That's what reconciling is about.

The righteousness of the Pharisees is inherently divisive, whereas the righteousness of the Kingdom of God and of Christ is inherently reconciling, producing healing.

Renewal of trust

When I know myself in his embrace, valued by him, I know that it is "all right" with me, whatever I have done. His embrace renews trust — in him but thereby also in myself and my own worth. His righteousness comes to me, to us, in that embrace. And his embrace enables us not only to be grateful but to become the arms of Christ embracing others, whatever their sin. In this way his righteousness becomes ours.

We "become the righteousness of God," as Paul puts it in 2 Cor. 5:21 (RSV). This radically new form of doing right and of being right, of righteousness, is the central theme of Paul's letter to the Romans, in many ways a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount.

Righteousness that heals

The righteousness of the Pharisees is inherently divisive, producing more brokenness, whereas the righteousness of the Kingdom of God and of Christ is inherently reconciling, producing healing among the nations, in the church and in families. Even among "publicans and sinners," among homosexuals and heterosexuals alike.

Thus the righteousness of the Kingdom does not and cannot leave us doing what the Pharisees did: focusing on how right or righteous we are in distinction from all those sinners out there (whom Jesus loved and valued) who get it all wrong. Was that not why the Pharisees crucified Jesus? His way of doing right threatened theirs. Is that not also what it means for us to deny ourselves and follow him all the way in obedience?

Only in doing so do we escape the slippery slope of legalism without succumbing to the slippery slope of libertinism.

Dr. Marvin Hoogland is ordained in the Christian Reformed Church and is a pastoral counsellor at the Chicago Christian Counseling Centre in Chicago. He lives in Oak Forest, Illinois.

Feature

Choices

Ryan Bradley

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The word* goldfish *evoked the memories of our last goldfish. They had arrived as a gift from the neighbor woman — a woman whose timing had been calculated. She hadn't been giving; she'd been getting rid of.

Groaning school bus air brakes announced my first grader's arrival. I had just begun to hear it lumbering off when the back door slammed, books banged on the kitchen table, and my breathless son raced into the room.

"Dad! Dad! Our teacher says we've got too many goldfish; and if you say okay, I can bring some home. Can I have a goldfish — or two? I'll take care of them. They'll be my friends."

The word *goldfish* evoked the memories of our last goldfish. They had arrived as a gift from the neighbor woman — a woman whose timing had been calculated. She'd caught the three of us at the supper table. She had hollered through the screen door, "It's me," entered, and quick-stepped to my son's side. She'd deposited a small fish bowl containing two large goldfish on the supper table, "These are for you, Bubb. They'll give you something to take care of." Then with the words, "I've got to run," she had quickly departed.

Although her words had said one thing, their tone and her eyes had said another. She hadn't been giving; she'd been getting rid of.

After a few weeks of feeding and changing water, the novelty had worn off; and my son's inherited chore, unknown to me, had fallen into his mother's hands.

Several months later, while helping him clean his room, I had noticed the larger goldfish cannibalizing the lesser. A quick separation had proved futile, and we'd been left with a solitary fish circling a small bowl — a sad existence. And at the disclosure of his neglectful care, I had decided the time for my son's first lesson in fundamental freedom had come. So, after several short conversations that had hopefully helped him to understand that freedom, I'd persuaded him to release his goldfish in his grandfather's pond — a place complete with cattails, moss and lily pads — a place where the goldfish would be free.

On our annual bluegill fishing trip, we had taken his goldfish in a large, water-filled plastic bag and released him. The fish had lingered near the surface, but then swam into the greenish depths.

We had caught and released several bluegills, and I'd returned home confident that my son had learned a basic lesson, only to find out later he had confided to his mother that letting his goldfish go had made him sad and he wished he had him back.

"Dad..., can I? I'll change the water. I'll feed them... all by myself."

I turned and faced the picture window; he leaned against its still. While both of us looked out, neither saw; each was confined to his own thoughts. I relived the memories of countless frogs, toads and snakes that I had caught and kept. The goldfish and hamsters purchased from the Five-and-Dime; and a Basenji, a dog built for movement, imprisoned in a house. All the mistakes that I had made before realizing each living creature had its rightful place, and being boxed or caged for amusement, my illusion of ownership had denied them their rightful place — their inherent freedom.

"Dad..., can I? I promise to take care of them."

Sincerity rang from his voice. It suddenly seemed such a small thing. Perhaps I should remain silent while he makes his own errors, finds his own way. Perhaps this time they would teach him responsibility.

Again I dug deeper into my conflicting thoughts, remembering how sad he had been when I had made him release the lightning bugs. But then I remembered how after several evenings of capture and supervised mornings of release, he now let the lightning bugs go free without being told.

I then remembered his sobs when I had forced him to return the toads — toads he had tupper-wared under his bed — back to the ivy that surrounds the house. But then I recalled his acceptance after he had realized he could wait until dark, turn on the outside light, and recapture the toads again and again as long as he returned them to the ivy.

Then I remembered the snakes — the garter snakes I'd found in my tool box after I had shown him where and how to catch them. Snakes held captive after I'd told him never to put them in a box. Snakes held captive after he'd promised that he would always set them free.

We had talked a long time. I had tried to explain that as a child I'd done the same; but as I grew older, I had realized how wrong it was. How I had begun to see that putting something in a box was the limit — to actually destroy the very thing I had wished to possess. How I had begun to see the illusion of possession for what it really was — the selfish pleasure generated by my own mind. I then recalled searching his eyes as we'd talked, looking for understanding, but finding only embarrassed silence.

"Dad...?"

His voice's inflection carried a perception. He knew his sought-after answer wasn't coming. I turned, and watched a tear slowly run the profile of his cheek — a tear which carried the intensity of youth's desire and the agony of rejection — a tear which splashed upon the sill, just before I told him no.

Ryan Bradley is the pen name of a freelance writer who lives in Fostoria, Ohio.

I relived the memories of goldfish and hamsters purchased from the Five-and-Dime. All the mistakes that I had made before realizing each living creature had its rightful place, and being boxed or caged for amusement, my illusion of ownership had denied them their rightful place — their inherent freedom.

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Comment

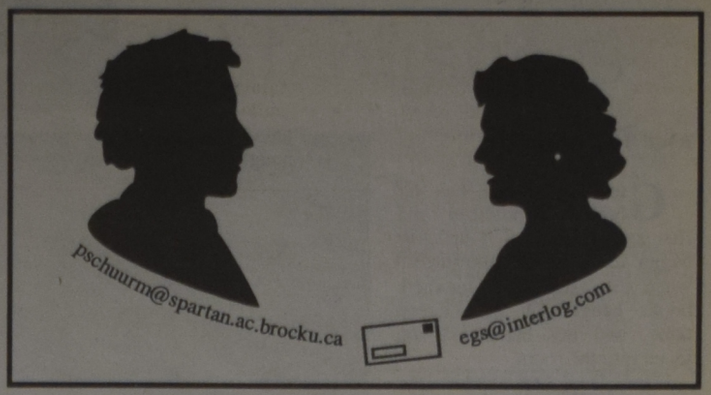
Two under 35

Christian Courier *wants to keep the promise made a year ago of complementing the "Two Over 60" column with one for younger readers. Actually, we promised "Two Under 30," but we couldn't quite live up to that. An extra five years added to the 30 gives us the two columnists we are now introducing.*

Elizabeth Salomons, 32, is an editor for a publishing company in Toronto and a member of First CRC there. Peter Schuurman is 27 and the Christian Reformed Church's chaplain at Brock University. He's a member of Jubilee Fellowship CRC in St. Catharines.

As you will gather from this first set of letters, Elizabeth and Peter didn't know each other before we threw them together in cyberspace and have never met in person. They have decided not to see each other for at least a year, and for that reason we are not publishing their pictures either.

Both of them take an interest in the weal and woes of the Reformed community and their generation. We welcome them both and wish them inspiration from their generation and guidance from above.



Dear Peter:

Bert Witvoet has asked you and me to dialogue together via cyberspace as a way of presenting *Christian Courier* readers with an inside glimpse into the "under-35" generation. I said, "Sure!" I figured it wouldn't be too hard to come up with something that made worthwhile reading. And I'm all for helping the *Christian Courier* readership towards an understanding of our generation.

Now it's time for the first letter. Gulp.

I'm asking myself, as I sit here at my computer at 6:00 a.m. trying to get this done before I head into a hectic day at the office from which I will return home, rather exhausted, about 11 hours later, why would I want to take on another extra-curricular activity? Isn't my life full enough already, what with full-time work, church activities, and enjoying time with my friends and an occasional movie or some theatre? Not to mention trying to keep my apartment presentable or doing my laundry. I hardly have time to write my own family members, much less you, somebody I've never met face to face.

So why am I so keen to take on this column?

Friends who don't know me well describe me as too quiet. Friends who know me better describe me as quiet, but that when I do speak up, what I have to say can be insightful and well worth hearing. Friends who live far away know I'm most verbose when I sit down in front of my keyboard and begin writing. So maybe this is a personal thing, making up for all those congregational meetings or bible-study discussions when I've sat in a corner, quietly listening, saying nothing.

Maybe it's broader than that. Maybe I interpret this as more of an ambassador-type of assignment in which I see this column as a challenge to be a spokesperson for our generation. And then my Protestant work-ethic kicks in and I can hardly refuse such a challenge. I suppose I ought to check in with my friends and siblings to see whether or not they trust me with that kind of responsibility.

I do know that I sometimes feel our generation tends to be disregarded in the big scheme of things. There are times when I've sat in my church pew feeling as if I have this big white sign hanging from my neck that says SINGLE YOUNG FEMALE, of which all three are qualifiers that somehow exclude me from the "mainstream" flow of congregational life.

Am I the only one who feels this way, I often wonder? Is it because I personally tend to be on the quiet side? Do my friends feel the same way?

I've participated in many small-group discussions and various social types of activities in the several congregations I've been part of since I left home at 18. The experiences I've always, consistently, found most satisfying are the cross-generational types of interaction. I have so much to learn from my fellow church members who are ahead of me in the school of life.

When once asked by a fellow member of such a group whether I wouldn't rather participate in a group consisting of only members of my own age bracket (this being a congregation that had no such young adults group at the time and was seeking to start one up), I pleaded, No! I explained how I felt as if my entire existence as a member of the Christian Reformed Church, from my beginnings in Sunday School all the way up through Calvinettes and Young People's, I'd been put in boxes defined by my age and that I was glad to be free of those barriers and participate as a full member of this denomination. And I strongly opposed being asked to go back into one of those boxes once again.

Well, Peter, here I am, freely and willingly being put back into a box that says "Two under 35." What do you think? Are we up to this challenge?

Elizabeth

Dear Elizabeth:

"Are we up for the challenge?" you ask. It does seem like a rather daunting task, for such youthful persons as ourselves. An internationally distributed newspaper no less!

One of my colleagues, a Roman Catholic priest, just mentioned the other day how nothing much is expected from a priest until he's 45. Wisdom, he said, comes with age, and the best start to ripen at about 45. He's 38, and considers himself a "rebel" for attending meetings with "the big-wigs" — the older crowd in the upper eschalons of church hierarchy.

False modesty aside, one part of me honestly agrees: I don't have decades of well-reflected experiences to pontificate on or from. There are so many things I know so little about. But that is completely irrelevant considering the purpose of this column as you state it: to help the readership towards an understanding of our generation.

That's something I'm fairly familiar with. First of all, I am a living case study of the subject; and secondly, my job surrounds me with 10,000 other case studies. As you already know, I work as the Christian Reformed chaplain at Brock University, and my days are spent comforting, challenging, celebrating and struggling with students from "our" generation in the name of Christ. I've only been here for a few months, but I already feel like my "generational experience" is multiplying as students share their stories with me. A picture of the generation and its faith journey is slowly being filled out in my mind.

This column makes for an excellent way of speaking on behalf of the "future" church and the "future" nation. As you said, we have never met. We basically throw ideas back and forth on e-mail, and this is our first printed "conversation." A very interesting experiment, no doubt. To communicate with someone via the written word, without seeing, hearing, smelling or touching each other. I have absolutely no idea what you look like or sound like! There is a very thin thread connecting us, perhaps characterizing our interaction at the very lowest level of intimacy.

I know there are some readers who probably can't stand such a "cold" and "distanced" form of interacting — whether with loved ones or strangers. And to an extent, I agree. It is not a good way to get to know another person. I would have a hard time writing back and forth to just any stranger. But the context of our writing — our common background, our common faith, our common purpose — makes it a meaningful thing. And besides, it is an appropriate form of communication for our generation, the first generation to be "wired" for relationships.

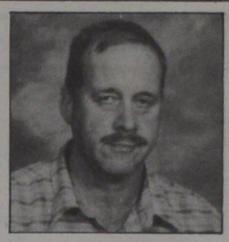
For example, many people in university are connected to friends and family via e-mail. I've even heard of people being converted, married, or hired for work through the Internet! So beyond our goal of bridging the generation gap, this is an interesting experiment on new technologies and human interaction, and we will keep reflecting on our thoughts and feelings regarding this media as we go along.

I will say this much, Elizabeth: I've read enough of your posts to know that you are indeed an insightful person (even though you're not 45), and that our letters should nicely compliment each other, as my wondering/wanderings have a different flavor from yours. To be "boxed in" with you in the "Two under 35" column is a welcome challenge.

Peter

'Rollover': a better way of plowing

Farm fodder



Maynard Vander Galien

Plows have always created the foundation for good crop husbandry. From the simplest peasant societies to highly advanced farming countries, plows are an essential tool for efficient and profitable crop production.

Even though alternative implements and methods are constantly being reviewed, the plow has qualities with which no other implement can compare. There is no better way of preparing an even, clean surface free of plant and weed residue, or of creating a tilth and loosening up the soil.

SHELLY NOSOWSON

Plowing demonstration of 32,000 rollover plow.

In farming today there are constant demands for increased output and higher working speeds. Over the years, tillage practices have changed in numerous countries, especially in North America.

Plowing can be a time consuming job. You step-out a field and install picket markers where you want to make the crowns (ridges). Your counting and your steps better be right on, or your plowed field is going to be narrow or wider on one end. If you do a neat job of plowing you have those crowns and dead furrows to deal with in the spring when you work the land. Farmers all hate dead furrows.

No crowns and dead furrows

To speed up my one-person farming operation and to have a smoothly plowed field that looked as if it had been turned over with one pass of a gigantic plow, I bought a rollover plow last summer.

This odd-looking plow has 10 furrows. Five point down and five point up. The plow, a semi-mount, is made in Sweden and costs around $32,000, twice as much as conventional five-furrow plows. Most European farmers use rollover plows, but it is a relatively new thing in North America. North American implement manufacturers don't seem to have the technology to make such a plow.

The Swedish company that made my plow sold 10 of them in Ontario last year. A company engineer from Sweden visited all the dealers who sold the plows and came to each farm to set up the plow for whatever tractor would pull it.

Beautiful fields, with less trouble

A rollover plow has furrows (blades, you could call them) that flip around when you pull a hydraulic lever, and you drive right back in the same furrow you just plowed.

I start plowing on one side of the field and finish on the far side, with no time lost through stepping out a field and making crowns. There's no travelling and packing the headlands — just turning. The absence of ridges and dead furrows will make spring field work a smooth and delightful operation.

I gave numerous plowing demonstrations last fall. My 100-horsepower tractor had no problem operating the plow. When the plow flips around it is barely noticeable from the tractor cab. No rocking. That's how smooth it turns.

Maynard Vander Galien farms near Renfrew, Ont.

Buying milk in the right package can reduce waste

(NC) — There are many little things that each of us, as consumers, can do to protect the environment. Taking care in choosing the milk packages we buy is one of the most effective ways to conserve resources and reduce waste.

What does buying milk have to do with reducing waste? Plenty. Milk is one of the most common and frequent grocery products bought by Canadian families. The more milk we drink, the more packaging there is to dispose of.

How can we help to reduce this waste? Choose milk packaged in four litre (3 x 1.33 litre) milk pouches. The "source reduced" milk pouch technology introduced by DuPont Canada is the best environmental choice in milk packaging. The 3 x 1.33 litre pouch is the only milk package to be certified by Environment Canada as an Environmental Choice Program EcoLogo product. Some dairies will soon be displaying the EcoLogo — three doves intertwined to form a maple leaf — on the milk pouch in recognition of its environmental benefits.

"Source Reduced" means less materials go into making the product. Solid waste experts say this is one of the biggest steps in reducing the impact of packaging on the environment. The less materials used, the less will be sent to landfills or into the waste stream. That's the power of "source reduction" — using a little less of something goes a long way.

How much less material goes into DuPont's milk pouch? Less than:

* one half the material contained in a four litre jug;
* one third of the material used in two 2-litre cartons.

Not only does the 3 x 1.33 litre milk pouch generate far less packaging waste, studies show that the manufacturing process to make the pouch uses less energy, and produces lower waste water discharges and air emissions compared to other types of milk packaging.

Milk has been sold in four litre milk pouches made by DuPont since the mid-1960s. Today, dairies across the country package about half the fluid milk sold in Canada in the four litre (3 x 1.33 litre) pouch. It is estimated that the pouches eliminate more than 12-million kilograms of waste each year that would be produced if other milk packages were used.

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Classifieds

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2-column anniversaries	$90.00
Obituaries	$45.00
Notes of thanks	$35.00
Birthdays	$40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $15.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to five column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $25.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Interested in placing an ad?

Get in touch with us for details.

Obituaries

Odoom, Chatham, the Neth. Ont.
March 15, 1915 - Dec. 31, 1996

"As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people both now and forevermore" (Ps.125:2).

On the last day of 1996, the Lord suddenly called home his child

JANTINA DE RAAF-ROFFEL

Loving wife of the late Jack De Raaf (1986).
Dear mother of:
Trudy & Henry Schaafsma — Windsor, Ont.
Addie Vreugdenhil — London, Ont.
Marian & Anton Brink — London, Ont.
Ellie De Raaf — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Loving Oma (and Great Oma) of:
Janet, Jeff, Jim & Anne (Jonathan Henry), Joanne & Dave, Mark, Marlene, Paul & Jennifer (Jesse), Eric & Bonnie (Kevin, Nathan), Karen, Renee.
She was predeceased by her daughter, Mina, and her son-in-law Henk Vreugdenhil.
Correspondence address:
Trudy Schaafsma, 3505 Glenwood Ave., Windsor, ON N9E 2Y6

Safe in the arms of Jesus.

On Saturday, Dec. 21, 1996, peacefully at home,

MARRIGJE ADRIANA KALISVAART
(nee DERUITER)

passed away to be with our Lord, in her 81st year.
Beloved wife of Martin J. (Tim) Kalisvaart.
Dear sister of:
Jean Krijgsman — Aylmer, Ont.
Jo & Am DeRuiter — the Neth.
Styntje & Art Markus — Bradford, Ont.
Dear sister-in-law of:
Adri DeRuiter — the Neth.
Co Moerman — the Neth.
Martyn Kwaadsteniet — the Neth.
Ingrid Kalisvaart — the Neth.
Alice & John Nieuwland — Oshawa, Ont.
Fondly remembered by nieces and nephews in Canada, the Netherlands and the U.S.A.
Funeral service was held at Zion Chr. Ref. Church, Oshawa, Ont., on Dec. 24, 1996, Rev. A. Koppendrayer and Rev. H. Wildeboer officiating.
Correspondence address:
100 Glenhill Dr., Apt. 908, Whitby, ON L1N 8R4

Personal

ONE TO ANOTHER

Christian companion magazine.
Hundreds of readers Canada-wide.
Single issue $5.
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Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Obituaries

1 Peter 1:3

On Dec. 27, 1996, God called home

GERRIT JAN LUIMES

at the age of 81.
Loving husband of Kryna Uitvlugt-van Oudenaarden.
Predeceased by his first wife Hendrika Cornelia Luimes-Jansen.
Dear father of:
Hank & Jane Luimes — Winchester
Wilma & Al Mulder — Ottawa
John & Jeannie Luimes — Toronto
Bill & Bonnie Luimes — Ottawa
Jack & Joyce Luimes — Ottawa
Tom & Greta Luimes — Kanata
Albert & Carolyn Luimes — Renfrew
Ed & Stephanie Luimes — Spencerville
19 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
Stepfather to Kryna's 10 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Funeral service was held at the Williamsburg Chr. Ref. Church, on Dec. 30, 1996, Rev. George Rowaan officiating.
Correspondence address:
Hank Luimes, Box 1010, Winchester, ON K0C 2K0

Schoterland, Fr. Brampton, Ont.
Nov. 28, 1907 - Jan. 10, 1997

The Lord in his mercy took home a loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather

EVERT SIKKEMA

Loving husband of the late Geertje (nee deHoop, 1992).
Survived by his loving children:
Bernie & Grace Sikkema — Brampton, Ont.
Hennie & Dick Boersma — Norval, Ont.
Jennie Woudstra — Acton, Ont.
Roelie & Ben Sikkema — Georgetown, Ont.
also survived by 20 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren.
Funeral services were held at Holland Chr. Homes, in Brampton, Ont., on Tuesday, Jan. 14, 1997, with Rev. Peter Van Egmond officiating.
Correspondence address:
D. Boersma, 9563 Winston Churchill Blvd., R.R. 2, Norval, ON L0P 1K0, Phone: (905) 455-8533.

Grootegast, Lucknow, the Neth. Ont.
May 14, 1925 - Jan. 5, 1997

Suddenly, on Sunday, Jan. 5, 1997, the Lord took home

WOBBE TOP

at the age of 71.
Dear brother of:
Willem Top — Lucknow
Henry Top — Brampton
Wietse Top — Acton
Jane Kars — Manitoba
Predeceased by his parents Jan Top and Antje Postmus, and two sisters, Jeanette and Froukje.
Funeral service was held on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 1997, in the Lucknow Chr. Ref. Church, Pastor Ron Luchies officiating. Interment at South Kinloss Cemetery, Lucknow, Ont.

Obituaries

Witmarsum, Fr. Ottawa, Ont.
April 10, 1916 - Jan. 2, 1997
Psalm 27

The Lord took to be with Him

HENDRIK (HENRY) VANDERMEULEN

in his 81st year. He passed away peacefully in the hospital.
Beloved husband of Pietertje (Nellie) (nee Brandsma).
Dear father of:
Yettie & Richard Zandbergen — Brinston, Ont.
Ypie & Frank Buwalda — Nepean, Ont.
Hilda & John DeJong — Spencerville, Ont.
Tina & Bill DeJong — Williamsburg, Ont.
Andy & Patsy VanderMeulen — Brinston, Ont.
Sid & Norma VanderMeulen — Nepean, Ont.
Dear Opa of 17 grandchildren.
The funeral service was conducted by Pastor Ken Gehrels on Jan. 4, 1997, at Calvin CRC, Nepean, Ont.
Correspondence address:
Yettie and Richard Zandbergen, R.R. #2, Brinston, ON K0E 1C0

Makkum, Fr. Brampton, Ont.
July 14, 1907 - Jan. 11, 1997

I am not my own, but belong — body and soul — to my faithful Savior.

The Lord, in His mercy, took home a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

MARGARET (GRIETJE) VANDERWERFF-SALVERDA

Survived by her loving husband, Peter, and her loving children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren:
Rinze & Nancy — Kitchener
Gregory, Michael, Karen
John & Jeanette — Smithville
Peter & Marijke, Shari & Michael, Julie, Eileen
Yellie & Harry Bick — Waterdown
Paul, Allan, Jason, Daryl
Christine & Jake VanDyk — London
Tonia (Sara, Melissa), Jonathan, Benjamin, Amanda
Bart & Wendy — Calgary, Alta.
Scott, Krista, Heather
Funeral services were held at Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont., on Jan. 14, 1997, with Rev. P. Kranenburg officiating.
Correspondence address:
P. Vanderwerff, Faith Manor, Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 McLaughlin Rd., Brampton, ON L6Y 5A7

"I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust'" (Ps.91:2).

Miscellaneous

Financing needed to develop rural business. Gladly pay 10 per cent interest.

Call Len VanderPloeg
at (403) 590-2010
in Calgary, Alta.

Personal

Chr. man, 63 years old, would like to correspond with Chr. lady, 58-65, for possible future relationship. N.W. of Kitchener, Ont. Please send letter and phone no. to **Fiie #2659, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.**

I am an **independent Chr. man in the mid 60s. I would like to meet a lady in the mid 50s.** I am a singer and enjoy music, and I also like to travel a lot. I don't smoke and I don't drink. Divorced in 1984. Please send letters to **File #2651, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

Job Opportunities

Social Service Work - Mutual Support Systems, a parent model network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioral difficulties, **invites applications for the position of Child Care Worker.** The responsibilities of this live-in position include involvement in educational programming, scheduling daily routines, and child supervision, within a family structured environment. Position includes salary and benefits package. Please submit resume to **Personnel Manager, Mutual Support Systems, P.O. Box 397, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 or call (905) 892-4332.**

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School anticipates hiring another **full-time teacher** for 1997/98. This position is required as a result of growth in our Grades 10-12 school. Consider joining our caring, encouraging society, who together with an excellent staff, work to provide an education rooted in the Reformed tradition to a great group of 100+ high school students. We encourage those with experience and/or expertise in arts and/or business education to apply, However, we will consider all applicants who are willing and able to teach a variety of core subjects. Applicants should preferably be graduates of a Christian college and/or having teaching experience in a Christian high school. Eligibility for an Alberta Teaching Certificate is required. Please send resumes to:

Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Central Alberta Chr. High School
22 Eagle Rd.
Lacombe, AB T4L 1G7
Phone: (403) 782-4535
Fax: (403) 782-5425

Classifieds

Teachers

BURNS LAKE, B.C.: Burns Lake Chr. School requires a **teacher/ principal** to commence Sept. 1997. Please send your resume with your statement of faith and philosophy of Chr. education to:

Robert Duiker, Principal
Burns Lake Chr. School
P.O. Box 574,Burns Lake, BC
V0J 1E0

FRUITLAND, Ont.: John Knox Memorial Chr. School invites applications for an **interim music teacher**. This position is 50% part-time and involves teaching music to grades 4-8 on a rotary schedule. A qualified candidate will be hired as soon as possible. Interested teachers should contact:

Mr. Julius de Jager, Principal
at (905) 643-2460
for additional information
and application forms.

Vacations

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Church News

Christian Reformed Church

Classis meeting:
— **Classis British Columbia N-W,** will meet in regular session **March 4 and 5, 1997**, D.V., at Immanuel CRC, Richmond, B.C. All agenda materials should be sent to the stated clerk as soon as possible. Peter Brouwer, Stated Clerk.

Attention: All churches Please inform us of important changes. Items under "Church News" will be included free of charge.

Look for our new monthly column **"Two under 35"** on page 14...

Job Opportunities

CALVIN College

The Calvin College Education Department seeks candidates for a tenure-track position which involves teaching psychology of education and introduction to teaching as well as the possibility of one of the following: 1) teaching secondary methods and curriculum courses in one of the disciplines; 2) special education and/or learning disabilities; 3) teaching elementary religion studies methods; and 4) teaching/advising in the graduate program.

Qualifications include: 1) an earned doctorate (or ABD) in a field related to psychology of education and/or curriculum and instruction; 2) secondary teaching experience; 3) course work and/or experience in a secondary school subject discipline; 4) a scholarship agenda; and 5) commitment to a Reformed Christian expression of faith.

Calvin College is a Christian college within the Reformed Christian tradition and is an equal opportunity employer. The College encourages the application of women and minority candidates. Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and curriculum vitae to: Dr. L. Steginк, Department Chair, Education Department, Calvin College, 3201 Burton St, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546, by February 1, 1997.

SEEKING A PASTOR

Horizon Community Church, a new CRC ministry of 100 families, is seeking a pastor. The church is located in the thriving suburban community of Highlands Ranch, a part of the **Denver Metropolitan area**. Key to the church's program is Bible-based dynamic preaching, enthusiastic worship, and sharing of the gospel in active outreach to a suburban community. Essential to the church's development is continued facilitation of the merging of two congregations and leadership for staff ministry. Please send inquiries and/or resumes to the **Search Committee, Horizon Community Church, 7140 S. Colorado Blvd., Littleton, CO 80122.**

Wycliffe BIBLE TRANSLATORS

TEACHERS NEEDED

157 positions to fill for the 1997-98 academic year: elementary & secondary teachers, itinerant teachers, tutors, administrators, librarians & student residence parents (in traditional and in nontraditional settings)

Children's education is vital to the Bible translation task. Good education programs enable members with children to continue their work.

Requirements: valid teaching certificate and minimum one year teaching experience

Contact: Children's Education & Family Services
Wycliffe Bible Translators
Box 3068, Station B
Calgary, AB T2M 4L6

E-mail: wis_canada@wycliffe.org
Phone:1-800-463-1143 Fax: (403) 250-2623

Job Opportunities

Pastor Needed

Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church in Edmonton is presently searching for a **pastor.** The search committee invites interested persons to establish contact with them for an information package, containing a profile of our church and other facts and figures pertaining to the ministry.
Please contact in strict confidence:
Bert Dost, 4422-115 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5W 0V9,
Phone (403) 474-4260; e-mail: bdost@compusmart.ab.ca.

Chemistry/Physics teacher needed

Toronto District Christian High School is soliciting applications from **chemistry/physics specialists** who would like to join a team with a vision for the future of high school education. Please contact me if you have any desire for this job which begins **August 1, 1997.** Send applications to **Ren Siebenga, c/o TDCH, 377 Woodbridge Ave., Woodbridge, ON L4L 2S8. E-mail: siebenga@tdch.torcon.com**

Miscellaneous

Please take advantage of our monthly Business Directory. For the low cost of $25 you can advertise your business.
(Please add 7 % G.S.T.)

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The fines are a real nuisance and can be substantial. So we need your help to avoid them. We kindly ask for your co-operation in promptly notifying us. And please take a minute to check the label on your CC copy to see if your current address is correctly shown. If not, please inform us. **Thank you for your continuing support!**

Circulation Manager
Christian Courier.

Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous

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For more information or forms, contact Mr. John Rhebergen.

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Renew your CC subscription now!

Our Circulation Manager is at her job every day trying to keep our subscriptions up to date. We spend thousands of dollars each year in postage sending out renewal notices, reminders, etc. To top it off, Canada Post charges us an extra fee for using the handy business-reply envelopes we make available. **This means that in order to get a subscription renewed we have to pay close to $1.00 in postage alone!**

The computer label on your *Christian Courier* copy shows the month in which your subscription is due. If your label shows that your subscription is due two or three months from now, *kindly consider sending us the renewal fee ahead of time*. This way, you will be assured that C.C. will be coming to you regularly, as well as saving us time and postage expenses!

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Please renew my C.C. subscription for the period indicated:
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P.S. If possible, glue your label in this space, or enclose it. Send to: **4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

"Free Hallelujah!"

Service commemorating the **50th anniversary** of the liberation of the Netherlands, held May 7, 1995, in St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, Ont. Featuring **Dr. Remkes Kooistra's** re-delivery of the sermon originally preached in Siegerswoude, Friesland, the Neth.,on April 15, 1945. Also participating: Ottawa's Citadel Salvation Army Band, three choirs, etc. To order this two-hours VHS (NTSC) video, send **$34.95** (incl. tax, S&H), by cheque/money order to **Bevmor Video Productions, 31 Carmichael Court, Kanata, ON K2K 1K1; Phone (613) 591-0722.**

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For details call:
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Phone: (905) 479-5885
Fax: (905) 479-4742

Classifieds/Events

Events

SALEM
Christian Mental Health Association

A Benefit Concert
An Evening of Celebration & Worship for the whole family with Colleen & Grace!

Sat., Feb. 8, 1997 at 7 p.m.

Ancaster CRC
70 Hwy. 53 East

Suggested donation:
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Andy Mast, 38 Haslemere Ave., Brampton, ON L6W 2X4

Events

REDEEMER COLLEGE

1997 MINISTERS' CONFERENCE

Ministers and their spouses are invited to the annual Ministers' Conference on **Tuesday, February 4, 1997**, 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario.

Guest speaker Dr. Wilbert Shenk will present: *"Envisioning the Church of the Future."*

Registration: $25/person or $40/couple, includes lunch and refreshments.
Call (905) 648-2131 to register.

REDEEMER COLLEGE: 777 HIGHWAY 53 EAST, ANCASTER, ON, L9K 1J4

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

Jan.31-Feb.1 Official opening and dedication of CLAC's new office building in Grimsby, Ont. Location: Christie St., west on S.Service Rd., **Grimsby,** Ont. **Jan. 31:** Opening ceremony 4-4:30 p.m., open house to follow. **Feb. 1:** open house 12 noon-3 p.m. Info.: 1-800-463-2522.

Feb. 1 Concert by the "St. Thomas District Male Choir," 7:30 p.m., Westmount CRC, **Strathroy**, Ont. Soloist: John de Jager (tenor). Tickets $10, $8 sen./students. Proceeds: Strathroy Food Bank.

Feb. 4 Annual "Ministers' Conference," for pastors and their spouses, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Guest speaker: Dr. Wilbert Shenk on "Envisioning the Church of the Future." Call (905) 648-2131 to register (#).

Feb. 4 The 1997 annual "Church & the Law Seminar," hosted by the Orangeville law firm of Wardlaw, Mullin, Carter & Thwaites in conjunction with the Can. Council of Christian charities. From 8:45 a.m. through 3:45 p.m., in Toronto at the Queensway Cathedral, 1536 The Queensway, **Etobicoke**, Ont. Guest speakers include Prof. M.H. Ogilvie (Carleton University) and lawyer George Grange (Washington, D.C.). The seminar is designed for pastors, church leaders and Christian charities to provide information on current legal issues. Pre-register by Jan. 28, 1997, at $5 per person, by contacting the CCCC at (519) 669-5137 or fax (519) 669-3291.

Feb. 8 Organ concert by Dr. Christiaan Teeuwsen, 8 p.m., Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. Works by Bruhns, Sweelinck, Fischer, Buxtehude and Bach. Admission free. Info.: (905) 648-2131.(#)

Feb. 8 "Salem Benefit Concert," an evening of celebration and worship for the whole family with Colleen and Grace, 7 p.m., Ancaster CRC (70 Hwy. 53 East), **Ancaster**, Ont. Suggested donation: $10/adult, $30/family (#).

Feb.21-Mar.1 Students of London District Chr. Secondary School, **London,** Ont., present the play OLIVEr. At 8 p.m. on Feb. 21, 22, 28 and Mar. 1. Info.: (519) 455-4360.

Feb. 22 Alberta convention of the Christian Heritage Party, 9:15 a.m., Sandman Inn, **Lethbridge,** Alta. Info.: Nellie Slingerland (403) 345-3205 or Cor Labots (403) 479-5147. E-mail: clabots@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca.

to March 13 "Strategic Pastoral Counselling" course will be offered on Thursday afternoons by Dr. David G. Benner, Professor of Psychology at Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. Recommended for pastors, elders and laypersons involved in counselling ministries. From 3-5 p.m. on Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, March 6 and 13. Info. 1-800-263-6467 (#).

Miscellaneous

Redeemer College

The time is right for

REDEEMER COLLEGE
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Japanese mission tour to India shows a growing, enthusiastic national church

Alan Doerksen

MADRAS, India — Although India is now virtually closed to missionaries, Christians form a healthy if tiny minority (three per cent of the population) and churches are growing quickly under Indian leadership.

ALAN DOERKSEN PHOTOS

Members of the Nakayoshi Church visit a church in Madras with Bishop Sargunam (back row, second from left).

In December, I had a chance to witness Indian church life first hand when I joined a mission tour to India, along with my wife, Junko, who is Japanese, and members of her home church, the Nakayoshi Church of Tokyo. "Nakayoshi" means friendship and this church has shown its friendship by forming partnerships with churches in India and the Philippines.

Partnering with other Asian churches

Like many churches, its members pray for and financially support mission work in other countries. But the Nakayoshi Church's vision for mission work goes one step beyond that. Each year, some church members travel to other countries in Asia (often the Philippines) to visit sister churches for the purpose of encouraging local Christians, sharing testimonies and building international friendships. The mission tours also encourage the faith of the Japanese church members and expand their personal sense of mission.

For many years, the Nakayoshi Church has offered prayer and financial support to churches in India connected with the Evangelical Church of India (ECI), a Protestant denomination started about 40 years ago. The Nakayoshi Church is connected with the Wesleyan-Holiness denomination in Japan.

While in India, we met Bishop Ezra Sargunam, the head of ECI, who established its first congregation in Madras in 1957, when he was only 19 years old. Sargunam is a dynamic man with a great sense of humor. His denomination is growing rapidly, and expects to organize 70 new congregations this year. By early 1998, there will be 1,000 ECI congregations, Sargunam predicts. But he is a humble man, who has a plaque over his desk reading, "Jesus first, others second, me last."

In December, 19 members of the Nakayoshi Church (about one quarter of the congregation) travelled to India for the mission tour. Together with Sargunam, they travelled across India from Madras to Trivandrum, Bombay and New Delhi. Junko and I joined the first leg of the tour and then stopped in Bangalore on our own to visit ECI churches there.

Warm welcome

Altogether, we visited nine Indian churches. Wherever we went, we received a warm welcome. At each church, members would give us wreaths of fresh flowers to wear and would often crowd around us to shake our hands and greet us, even if they spoke little English.

One highlight of the tour was attending the dedication service of a new church near Trivandrum, in the far south of the country. After a long ride along the rough roads of the countryside, we came to a small village. All around were banana farms, cows, ox carts, and even an elephant working on someone's farm.

When we got out of the van we were surprised to see a marching band approaching us, welcoming us to the new church. The drummers and wind players were all from the church.

At the church, there was a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by a service in which members of the Nakayoshi Church gave their testimony and explained why they had donated the money that had paid for the new church building. Later on, the church members served us a lunch of curried food and rice on banana leaves. Following India custom, we used our right hands to eat the food (no forks, knives or chopsticks).

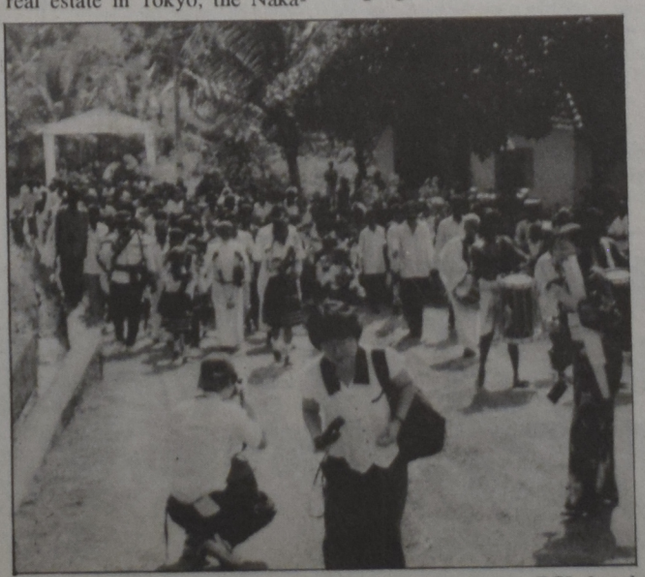
Yen power

Ironically, even though the Japanese church has helped pay for several new church buildings in India over the years, it has no church building of its own. Because of the enormous cost of real estate in Tokyo, the Nakayoshi Church usually meets in an office building. But the Japanese yen is worth much more in India, making it possible for the Nakayoshi Church to pay for buildings there more easily.

Enthusiastic worship is common at India's ECI churches.

New Year's Eve is a time of celebration in India. We spent New Year's in Bangalore, which seems to earn its name from the constant bangs of firecrackers on New Year's Eve! We visited two churches there on New Year's Eve and one the next morning. Each church welcomed us, although we hadn't given them advance notice of our visit.

At each service, we gave our greetings in English and they were translated into the local languages, one of which is Kannada. One pastor asked me to help serve communion, which surprised me. We shared coffee and New Year's cake with the church members and returned home by auto-rickshaw (sort of a three-wheeled scooter with a roof) at 2:30 in the morning.



A marching band welcomes Japanese visitors to the new ECI church in Trivandrum.

Not by electric power

Church services in India are markedly different from many in North America. Spontaneity seems to be a strong part of ECI worship. Songs are sung enthusiastically and are often accompanied by clapping, hand-held drums, tambourines and sometimes electric keyboards. But electric power often goes out, sometimes during services. At one church we visited the power went off in the middle of a song. But the keyboard player didn't miss a beat. He simply picked up a nearby violin and finished the song.

One striking thing about India is the pervasive poverty. Everywhere we went, we saw people begging and living on the street or in mud and grass shacks. Cows are everywhere and the air is thick with pollution.

But our lasting impression is of the friendliness and enthusiastic faith of the Christians we met. The church is growing, but converts to Christianity face opposition from family members and have trouble finding good jobs in this Hindu-dominated society. India needs our prayers.